J. A. Malcoan

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER NINETY-SIX

"*And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.*" Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

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Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

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1923

New Year Greetings

THANKS BE TO GOD that his grace has preserved us, "kept us from falling," through another year!—that so many of us are still of one heart and of one mind in respect to his Word and its service! Our appreciation must be increased by the remembrance that every testimony of the Word is to the effect that this is to be a time of special testing to all professing to be the Lord's people:—"every man's work shall be tried so as by fire." When we remember that the Adversary is to be permitted to bring "strong delusions" upon the Lord's people for the very purpose of sifting out all not truly his,—that they may believe lies and depart from the truth and be condemned as unworthy:—because they received not the truth in the love of it" (2 Thess. 2:10-12)—it surely should call forth our thanks to God that the opening of another year finds us still standing fast,—appreciating the truth and in full accord with all the divine appointments by which he has kept us from falling.

The Apostle reminds us that rejoicings do not belong as properly to him that putteth on the armor as to him who, having fought the good fight to the finish, shall lay aside the armor and put on robes of glory in the First Resurrection. (1 Kings 20:11; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.) Consequently we must not stop too long even to rejoice that we are what we are by the grace of God, but must go on! The new year is surely full of blessings for the faithful, according to all the precious promises of our Father's Word. We must grasp these afresh, allowing the Lord's faithfulness of the past to establish our trust the more firmly for the future. Without faith as the trolley to connect us with the current of divine power we will fail to "go on unto perfection."

"Faith can firmly trust Him,—come what may."

Love, too, should be stimulated by a retrospective glance;—discerning the mercies of the Lord toward us should enthuse us with loving zeal for Him and his. "We love him because he first loved us!" We seek to do those things pleasing to our Lord because we love him, and in proportion as we love him we will delight in such obedience and service,—even at the cost of self-sacrifice.

Good resolutions and the re-examination of our ideal and standards of life are appropriate at this season, too. Not that the fully consecrated can add to their consecration—for, if proper, it included our all. Not, either, that we should have an annual round up when we would seek pardon and start out afresh—as typical Israel did each "Day of Atonement" at the beginning of their new year. Spiritual Israelites, rather, are to live a daily, an hourly life of nearness to the High-Priest. The blood of the Covenant is to be continually invoked for the cleansing of the slightest defilement of conscience, that thus the wedding garment of our Lord's imputed righteousness may not become bedraggled, but that the slightest spot being removed, we may have it "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

Nevertheless, self-examinations and good resolutions have a value at this season in particular. That reviews of business; taking account of stocks; ascertaining the profits and the losses of the year; etc., are profitable in respect to worldly affairs, all will admit: and the much more important affairs of the soul—the ascertainment of gains and losses as New Creatures, and how and when and where these came to us in the constant battle with the world, the flesh and the devil, will surely profit all who make such reckonings with an eye single to the pleasement of the Lord.

Let us, then, set out spiritual aims, ambitions and endeavors still nearer to the perfect divine standard; remembering the while our Lord's words, "Without me ye can do nothing," let us be strong and courageous in the strength which he supplies and promises to increase as we are able and willing to accept it.

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We have noted the rapid progress of Socialism. . . .

Socialism should not be confounded with Communism or Anarchism; nevertheless, we believe it will surely eventuate in anarchy. Capital—private ownership—will not consent to Socialism on a broad basis and the conflict resulting will be what neither party premeditates or desires.—Z. '03:3, 4.

The Message of the Risen Christ

Revelation 1:10-20

Golden Text:—"I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."

THE messages of our glorious Lord, sent through the Apostle John and given to us in the symbols of the book of Revelation, are as truly the Savior's messages as those uttered during his earthly ministry and those subsequently sent us through the apostles.

The book of Revelation was written at a time when severe persecution was upon the infant Church—near the close of the first century, probably A.D. 93-96, in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, though some date it nearly thirty years earlier, in the reign of Nero. No matter—in either case it was written at a time of special peril and severe persecution. For a time the Lord allowed the truth to become well planted and to take root; the gifts of miracles and other gifts in the Church at that time assisted in this matter.

For a time, although there were persecutions of individuals such as are recorded in Acts, the believers as a whole were not subjected to the severest of trials at first. It was when the truth began to spread, and had not only the enmity of the Jews but also of the Greeks, that emperors and governors found favor with the masses by persecuting the followers of Jesus. And for aught we know, so it will be in the not-far-distant future. For a long time the pure truth has been hidden from men, and worldliness in the form of godliness has had the upper hand in influential circles; but doubtless, as the troublous times the Scriptures predict for the end of this age draw closer, those who will stand firm for the word of the Lord's testimony may expect to be made the scapegoats under various pretexts. We shall not be surprised to find a considerable measure of persecution against all the children of the light, who will walk up to the light. John, the beloved disciple, in some measure or degree typified or represented the last living members of the little flock. Doubtless this was the meaning of our Lord's statement, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" John did not tarry, but a class whom he in some respects illustrated are represented to tarry—a class who see with the eyes of their understanding the visions and revelations which John saw in symbols in a trance.

John at the time of the trance vision was a prisoner, exiled to the Isle of Patmos, a penal colony of those days—an island almost uninhabitable, rocky, barren. The crime for which he suffered this banishment was his faithfulness as a mouthpiece of the Lord. At the time he must have been between sixty and ninety years of age, supposing that none of our Lord's disciples were younger than himself at the beginning of his ministry. If his exile in any degree symbolized ostracism, which the Lord's followers may expect in the close of this age—a complete isolation from others and a treatment implying that they are prisoners—we may take comfort in the thought that as the Lord's favor and revelations to John more than offset his persecutions, so the opening of the eyes of our understandings and the granting to us of greater lengths and breadths and heights and depths of knowledge and appreciation of our Lord and his plan will far more than offset the various experiences which in his providence he may permit to come upon us. His assurance is that all things shall work together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to his purpose. Whoever rests his faith securely upon his promise may indeed with the Apostle Paul count all tribulations as loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

On the Lord's Day

Presumably John referred to the first day of the week, now generally called Sunday. It is peculiarly to us the Lord's day—the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, and on which all the promises of God's Word received life and our hopes through Christ were quickened. We may see in the expression also a reference to the Millennial age, called in the Scriptures frequently, "The Day of Christ." We, today, according to our understanding of chronology, are living in the early dawn of this day of Christ, and it is here and now properly that we begin to see the wonderful things of the divine character and plan. But to see these things, to understand these things, we must be in the spirit. Only those who have become new creatures in Christ Jesus can be expected to understand and appreciate spiritual things, and this is the class whom John represented. As John heard a voice behind him and looked in that direction, so we who now are having

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There are many reasons for concluding that while the messages were given to the seven churches specified and were applicable to them, they should properly have a still wider application to the whole Church of Christ, the number seven representing completeness and the order representing different epochs in the history of the Church. Thus the Church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the Church in the Apostle's days at the time of the writing of the messages, while the Laodicean Church would represent the Church in our day—in the end of the Gospel age. The other churches would correspondingly represent different epochs intermediate, between the beginning and now. To think otherwise would be to attach more importance to those seven comparatively small churches of Asia Minor than they would seem to have deserved, and would have implied an ignoring of other churches more numerous and more influential than they; as, for instance, the churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Colosse, Philippi, Thessalonica, etc. Furthermore, the details of the messages given to these seven churches apply to and fit historically the one Church of the living God, over every member and branch of which the Lord has a care. This thought, that the seven represented completeness, we find emphasized in the other symbolical representations—in the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars, etc.

Seven Golden Candlesticks

Turning and looking, John saw in symbol as we may now see with the eye of faith and understanding. He saw one like a Son of man [like a man—like a priest, as implied by the clothes described] walking amongst seven golden candlesticks, caring for them, trimming the wicks, seeing to the supply of oil, etc. We see that our Lord Jesus, our glorified Master, although absent from us, has been present with his Church throughout the past eighteen centuries and more, protecting the interests of his cause and directing in respect to all of his people's affairs, especially inspecting and caring for the Church as a light bearer, a candlestick. Alas, how poor the wicks sometimes have been, how feeble the light that has sometimes shone out into the darkness, how much of trimming has been necessary and how much more may yet be necessary!

In the Tabernacle, and subsequently in the Temple of Solomon, the golden candlesticks or lampstands were placed by the Lord's direction—not seven candlesticks, but one with seven branches, representing the whole Church, the complete Church during the Gospel age. In Revelation the same candlestick or lampstand is brought to our attention, but the parts are separated—the union, the relationship between them, being supplied by our Redeemer, the antitypical High Priest. The lampstand symbolized the Lord's nominal people of the Gospel age, including his "members." It holds forth the light of life, the light that shines in the darkness and which he directed should be so let shine before men that they might see our good works and glorify the Father in heaven. Alas! the Master evidently found but few good works, but little glorifying light shining out from his earthly representatives in many of these epochs. This is represented by his messages, chidings, encouragements, etc., given to each of these epoch churches represented by the different candlesticks or lampstands. It is to be noted that the lampstand represents the nominal Church of Christ rather than the true. This is shown by the fact that in the Lord's addressing each of these lampstands or churches he finds fault with the many and approves the few, especially so in the last, the seventh, the Laodicean Church of our day.

The Appearance of Christ

We are not to regard the word-picture of verses 13-16 as a portrait of our Lord in glory. It is a symbolical picture merely. He will not look as here described when we see him as he is and behold his glory. This symbolical picture, nevertheless, has precious lessons for us, more useful than an attempt to describe to our minds the appearance of our Lord as a spirit being, "dwelling in light which no man can approach unto," and which we cannot appreciate until we shall be "changed" and be like him and see him as he is.

His head and hair as white as wool and snow tell us of his wisdom, and that he is the "Ancient of Days:" they speak also of splendor and purity. His eyes like a flame of fire tell us in symbol that our Master is all-seeing, omniscient: that he is not deceived by outward forms or ceremonies, but can and does read every thought and intent of the heart. The contemplation of his glance should of itself purge and purify our hearts to the extent of ability, to put far from us everything which would have his disapproval.

Having described the head John mentions the hands and feet. The remainder of the body was covered with a garment which reached from his head to his feet. This may possibly represent the fact that the glory of Christ was manifested in his own person, in his own ministry and in that of his twelve apostles, his representatives, and that with their death the body of Truth was almost completely vailed throughout the eighteen centuries intervening until now, in the end of the age, the feet members will be illuminated by the Truth and shine forth—not like the Head, but as polished brass. When we think of the great advantage every way which we of the present age possess, we are inclined to say, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holiness of living and God-likeness. We who have the focused rays of divine inspiration and revelation from the past 6,000 years shining upon us with almost burning brightness, how it should consume in us all the dross of selfishness, how it should purify us, how humble it should make us, how we should be even in our flesh polished, bright, luminous representatives of the glorious Head and members of the Christ!

"In His Right Hand Seven Stars"

The countenance of the majestic one present amongst the candlesticks is represented as being like lightning. This reminds us of Daniel's description of the holy one who communicated the message of God to him upon one occasion; it reminds us of Paul's description of the great light that he saw on his way to Damascus, which represented to his understanding the glorified Lord shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday. So great was the splendor that John fell as dead when he beheld it, just as Daniel fell prostrated and was like a dead man in the presence of the mighty one whom he saw, and just as Saul of Tarsus fell down before the majesty displayed to him. So symbolically with us, when once we get a glimpse of the glories of the divine character through the divine plan, when once we get a true view with the eyes of our understanding of him with whom we have to do, as the great heart-searcher and caretaker of his Church, we fall before him humbled to the dust, realizing that we are imperfect, that we cannot stand before our Master, that we are unworthy of his favor and blessing. But as he touched John gently, raising him up, so he has spoken to us comfort, peace and love, assuring us that we have not an High-Priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but, on the contrary, one who is able to sympathize and mercifully to assist, one who has bought us with his own precious blood, who has accepted us and will number us as his body members so long as we abide in him, seeking in our hearts to know and to do his will.

His comforting assurance to us is (1) "Fear not." The same message that the Father sent us through the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Their fear of me is not of me, but is taught by the precepts of men." (Isa. 29:13.) This lesson, "Fear not," is one of the first that we must learn. We cannot come into close sympathy with our Lord and be taught of him respecting other features of his plan until we learn this lesson, "Fear not," until we learn to have confidence in him as the one who loved us and bought us with his precious blood, and whose purposes toward us continually are for our welfare and, if we submit ourselves to his guidance, to bring us off conquerors and more than conquerors. (2) "I am the First and the Last." We must recognize our Lord as the one who was the beginning of the creation of God and the end of it, the one by whom were all things, the one who is next to the Father, his very representative in everything pertaining to the affairs of the universe.

(3) We must recognize him as the one who was dead, the one who really died for our sins, but who as really was raised out of death by the power of the Father. (4) We must realize that he is alive for evermore, that death has no more dominion over him, that the work is finished, that neither sacrifices of the mass nor death in any other sense or form has dominion over him nor ever will have, nor will ever be needed; his work is perfect, and, as he cried on the cross, "It is finished." (5) We must recognize that he has the keys, the authority, the power over the tomb, to deliver from it all who are there imprisoned. We must also realize that he has the "key," the power over death, so that those whom he liberates from the prison-house of death, the tomb, like those who have not yet gone into it but who are under the sentence of death, may all be ultimately delivered, set free from the dominion of sin and death, delivered into the full liberty of the sons of God, righteousness and life eternal.

It is this one whom we thus know, thus recognize as the instructor and caretaker of the candlesticks, the churches; whom we are to recognize also as having in his right hand, in his favor as well as in his power, seven stars—the angels or messengers of the seven churches. These stars apparently represent special ministers or servants of the Church. In Revelation 12:1 the Church is pictured as a woman crowned with twelve stars. These stars evidently represent the twelve apostles as the special lights of the Church. Similarly, in the picture before us, the seven stars which the Lord holds in his right hand seem to represent special light-bearers in the Church—in each of the seven phases or developments. That they are held in his right hand seems to teach us that these should be considered as in some special sense under the Master's guidance and protection and care in the interest of the churches which they represented.

It will be noticed that the messages to the various churches are all addressed to these stars or messengers or angels of the churches, as though he would have us understand that the appropriate message for each appropriate time or epoch in the Church's experience would be sent by the Lord through a particular star or messenger whom he would particularly commission as his representative. Our Lord himself is represented by the great light of the sun, and his special messengers in the Church throughout the entire period are consistently enough represented as stars. The difference between the figures of the star and the candlestick is manifest: the star light is the heavenly light, the spiritual enlightenment or instruction; the lamp light is the earthly light, representing good works, obedience, etc., of those who nominally constitute the Lord's Church in the world and who are exhorted not to put their light under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and to let their light so shine as to glorify their Father in heaven.

A Sharp, Two-Edged Sword

No part of the description could more thoroughly convince us that the description of our Lord here given is a symbolical one than does this statement that out of his mouth proceeded a two-edged sword. As a symbolic picture, however, it is full of meaning to us. It speaks of the word of the Lord as the sword of the Spirit, "sharper than any two-edged sword." It reminds us that our Lord's words are not one-sided, not merely directed against sin in one class, that his word is sharp and cutting in every direction, that sin is reproved by him as much when found in his most earnest followers as when found elsewhere. It assures us that none need attempt to pluck out the mote from his brother's eye without getting rid of the beam in his own eye. It assures us that if we do not show mercy to those who are our debtors we must not expect mercy from him who has proposed to extend his mercy to us.

How heart-searching is the Word of God when we get to understand it—not merely as a compendium of rules and regulations, but when we come to catch the spirit of it, when we come to see that its requirement is love out of a pure heart, first to the Father, secondly to our Lord and Head, thirdly to all his brethren, fourthly to the world in general, groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for the glorious blessings of the coming day, and fifthly, sympathetically toward our enemies also, realizing that they are warped and twisted and blinded through the deceitfulness of sin and through the machinations of the great Adversary.—Z. '05:167-170.

Cross-Bearing a Privilege

"And as they led Him away, they laid hold upon one Simon. . . . and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."—Luke 23: 26.

THIS TEXT brings before our minds the whole scene of our Master's shame, ignominy—His condemnation by the Roman Governor at the solicitation of the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees—men of His own nation. Those who led Him away were the centurion and soldiers appointed by Pilate—not willingly, but by reason of the stress laid on him by the Jewish nation. The chief priests had threatened to report him as unfaithful to the interests of the Roman Empire, if he did not condemn Jesus. And then how would the Emperor treat him who allowed this humble Nazarene to make the claim of being king in territory under Roman jurisdiction?

We remember that the Jewish Sanhedrin tried the Lord under a different charge altogether. Their charge against Him was **blasphemy,** the penalty of which, under the Law, would have been stoning to death. Possibly they were not allowed to do stoning at that time; or possibly they feared the people.

It was not Divinely intended that our Lord should be stoned, but that He should be treated as a cursed one—hanged upon a tree. (Deuteronomy 21:22, 23.) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." (John 3:14, 15.) So through fear of the multitude or from lack of authority from the Roman Governor, the Jews failed to stone Jesus.

Since they could not bring the charge of blasphemy before a Roman Court, they were obliged to bring a different charge—that, while **they** were **loyal** to the Roman Emperor, **Jesus** was **disloyal** to the Roman interests. Pilate washed his hands of the affair. He wished to be free from any guilt. But under stress of the Jews, and willing to keep peace, he caused the charge to be made that our Lord was crucified because of claiming to be King of the Jews.

The narrative seems to imply that Jesus bore His own cross on the way to Calvary, and that He fell beneath its weight. There might have been various reasons for this. He was weak from undergoing very rigorous physical and mental strain. He had suffered from the bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, and had endured different trials—before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, and before Herod. After this He was flogged! We can imagine that a person who had undergone so much would be scarcely able to walk, let alone carry a burden.

The Probable Weight of the Cross

When we think of our Lord as a perfect man, we would not think of Him as being the strongest of men. The imperfections of our race have manifested themselves in various ways. We have no reason to suppose that the first specimen of our race, Adam, was of surpassing strength, which might denote coarseness. We see this principle illustrated in fruits and vegetables. When we find an overgrown apple, we learn that it is not so tender as one of average size. So with a man of great physical stature—a giant. He might be coarse. We are to think of our Lord, not as extremely rugged, nor as weak, but as of great delicacy, and of reasonable strength and fiber.

When we think of the cross, too, we believe that it was of no light weight. We know of no light woods in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The most common tree there is the olive, which is an extremely heavy wood and of remarkable density. If we should suppose the cross to have been three feet in the ground and of reasonable height, it must have been at least twelve to fourteen feet long, and the cross-beam must have been at least five feet. Allowing a reasonable thickness for strength and for keeping it from bending under its load, we would think that the cross must have weighed from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds. This gives us the thought that it was no light weight.

Lessons From the Incident

We have every reason to sympathize greatly with the tradition that the Lord **fell** under the weight of the cross. It was at this juncture that Simon, evidently a strong and rugged countryman who was passing by, was stopped by the centurion and his band, and compelled to assist Jesus in carrying the cross. Apparently, even then, its weight was on Jesus.

There are lessons for us in this incident. One is that the disciples of Jesus, the faithful eleven, missed an opportunity of cross-bearing. At first we might be inclined to censure them severely. We must reflect, however, that they feared for their lives. We may sympathize with them, and at the same time learn a lesson of greater courage in everything connected with the Master.

It is true that the multitude might have been as anxious to cry for the death of the disciples as for the Lord's. But one of them had said that he was ready to die for the Lord, and so said they all. How strange that in the moment of testing they did not display the courage! It is much easier to attest great loyalty, great faithfulness, than it is to manifest these traits when the test comes. With the opportune moment, come the difficulties, and the fearful sights and sounds, carrying terror with them.

We, of course, have no opportunity of doing anything of this kind for the Master Himself. But we realize that He is still with us in the brethren. What a precious privilege this affords us of still helping to bear the Master's cross! How advantageous to know that He still recognizes that whatsoever is done unto the least of these His brethren is done unto Him!

Cross-Bearing Precedes Crowning

Another thought that we have in this connection is that Simon, under the necessity of cross-bearing, would receive the burden either willingly or unwillingly. We have no record of what his experiences were. There is a tradition which declares that he afterwards became one of the Master's disciples. So in the Lord's providence sometimes there is responsibility laid upon us. And if the Lord lays a cross upon us, will it be borne with gladness or with murmuring? If the former, we shall have a blessing, even though we had not sought the cross, even if it had been forced upon us.

When trials and difficulties come, and crosses are forced upon us, happy are we if we appreciate the opportunity of cross-bearing, recognizing that this is closely connected with the crowning. Simon represented in this case all of the Lord's faithful ones who help to bear the cross, following His example, walking in His steps. The cross will not be too heavy for us. The Lord will bear the heavy end of it; and our experiences will be only such as will be for our good and will work out for our blessing.

"I know not the way that's before me.
The joys or the griefs it may bring;
What clouds are o'erhanging the future,
What flowers by the wayside may spring.
But there's One who will journey beside me,
Nor in weal nor in woe will forsake;
And this is my solace and comfort,
'He knoweth the way that I take.'"

—Z. '13:120.

Cleansing from Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Cor. 7:1.

IN OUR TEXT the expression, "filthiness of the flesh," seems to be a general one, in contrast with the Divine purity in which man was created. All violation of Law is sin; and all sin is symbolized by leprosy, a very filthy disease. The Apostle, however, does not mean that he and the other brethren were filthy in having the very gross sins that the world has; for any one worthy of the name of brother in Christ would have turned his back upon all gross sins and would have put away all those before he could have become a brother. But the Apostle is speaking of the "dearly beloved" who have left all these, who have left the "wallowing in the mire," as the Apostle Peter puts it.

To what extent we may cleanse ourselves will depend upon the viewpoint from which we speak. The Apostle's thought seems to be that we **continue** cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, as though he were pointing to a **progressive** work—to a high standard toward which we progress: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) In one sense, this is impossible. With imperfect bodies, we cannot always do perfectly, even with the best of intentions and motives. But God's provision is that the blood of Jesus Christ keeps cleansing us from all sin, so that His people should maintain this very condition in the Lord's sight—a condition of perfection at all times. That is to say, if they find they have come short, they should go to Him for a covering of their blemishes.

But even if the Lord's people do not recognize where they have done wrong, they should know that all have sinned and come short; therefore, they should entreat the forgiveness of their trespasses. They should come to the frame of mind where they will be willing to cover the weaknesses of others, as **they** desire to be forgiven by God. We cannot suppose that God would be in love with any one who is practising sin. But He has made that arrangement by which we may be cleansed from sin. Thus the Lord's people are exhorted to be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Their robe is to be wholly without filthiness of the flesh. If a spot should appear, small or great, it would be the duty and privilege of the one whose garment is soiled to have it cleansed without delay and not to remain in filthiness. This matter of keeping our garment unspotted from the world is one that should have our continual attention if we would have the Lord esteem us without spot or wrinkle.

What Constitutes Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit?

"Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." It is the New Creature that is addressed. It is the New Creature that is to do the cleansing—the new will. The flesh is what remains of the old creature which has been reckoned dead as respects domination of mind or will. But the old body has been turned over to the new will to be its servant of righteousness, to be its tabernacle, until it receives its glorious body in the resurrection. The new will has the stewardship or responsibility over the old body. Not only are we not to permit it to practise sin, but we are to control it in the service of righteousness.

The Apostle here says that we are to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh; and we are to judge of what might be filthy habits—or of habits we have that we might afterwards think filthy, impure, undesirable. As rapidly as we come to recognize these, we, as New Creatures, will seek to expunge them, eradicate them, remove them. Sometimes filthiness of the flesh is manifested by uncleanness of the hands, uncleanness of the teeth, etc. From the time the Holy Spirit begins to operate, the Lord's people want their bodies washed literally; they want their hands clean; they want their teeth clean. Again, filthiness of the flesh might be in the nature of rubbing snuff on the nose, for instance. This would not be quite so bad as the chewing of tobacco, not quite so filthy as the smoking of tobacco. The same person at different times in his experience might have different conceptions of this matter, but as we come to see we should correct these habits.

But above all, the Lord's people desire purity in their inward parts; and the Apostle says that we should cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the spirit. This does not imply that the New Creature is filthy, but that the mind is filthy. How could the mind of the New Creature be "filthy" or unclean? We answer that the New Creature must use the old brain; and it is for the New Creature to exercise control, not only in the things which we chew and take into our bodies, but also in the operation of the brain, so that we shall think purely; for the brain, as well as the hands and feet, is the implement, the servant, of the New Creature, who is responsible for these things. He is to show his loyalty to the Lord by the way he deals with these things entrusted to his care.

Considering the latter part of the text, we are to understand that God will look even deeper than our words and actions—even to the thoughts and intentions of our minds, to see to what extent we would harbor an impure thought. If we find that there has been harbored in our mind a thought disloyal to the Lord and to the brethren, or a malicious thought, whether spoken or not, it is a sin, a blemish, a filthiness of the mind; for it is something out of harmony with us as New Creatures—out of harmony with our God.

The Apostle puts cleansing the flesh first; not that we are to have the flesh clean before the mind, but we are more liable to see the defilements of the flesh than those of the mind. As we get into the practise of looking for the imperfections of the flesh, we are not to forget to look after the imperfections of the mind, as the Apostle exhorts. He proceeds to say that we are learning more and more, under the instructions of our Lord and Head, the Father's Representative. We are in the School of Christ, learning what the standards of truth and righteousness are. Now, if we would not do the things which would offend our earthly friends, then we should be very zealous lest we come short of doing the things which would be pleasing in the Father's sight.

The Misrule of the Mind of the Flesh

There is a difference to be observed between the spirit, which stands for mind, and the will, which is the New Creature. As an old creature we had both a mind and a body; and the mind in a more or less riotous manner had more or less irregularly governed the body. Sometimes one organ was in control; sometimes another; at one time the organ of alimentiveness, at another time, another faculty. But these qualities of the mind are more or less unbalanced by our conditions in life and our environment.

The world in general seems to be running along this line. Today they find pleasure in one thing; tomorrow in another. Sometimes it is ambition. One may say, "I will be a great general," and that thought becomes the mastering element of his mind. With another, the chief thought is some scheme of motherhood; with another it may be pride of dress and show; with another it may be the love of money, which becomes the controlling element of mind; with still others it may be politics which takes possession of the life. In either case, it rules the life. Anything which would interfere with these aspirations would be pushed aside; and anything that would help them would be encouraged.

But with the Christian the matter is different. His aspirations and ambitions are that he may be in harmony with God and have the blessings of eternal life, which it is God's will to give to any who are of the right attitude of mind. With the world, the first thought is, "I have been working for some time to be a politician, and I will continue"; or "I have been striving for a certain position in society, and I will still strive for it"; or what not. Frequently the thought of becoming children of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, is set aside as being too hard to strive for. Their thought is that they do not know whether or not they would ever get the things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9)—the things which God has prepared for those that love Him—for at first these things are not great inducements. This appreciation of righteousness is what the Scriptures intimate to be God's drawing influence.

But if the right influences prevail, there will be a radical change of life, the reward of which, if faithful, is to be a high and glorious future. Our Lord said that we should first count the cost. Those who take heed to His counsel, in proportion as they may realize what that cost is, find it to be the putting aside of all earthly ambition or honor. These must all be laid aside or counted as loss or dross in contrast with God's glorious promises.—Z. '12:62, 63.

We as New Creatures should learn to think as God would have us think, to develop habits of thought which upbuild the New Creature. We should eat and drink according to His will, and our clothing should be regulated according to His will. We are to seek His guidance in our life in all things—because of the weaknesses of the flesh, the promptings of the Adversary, and our environment. The Lord has made provision, and has given us definite instructions in the Scriptures, by which we may regulate our lives in harmony with His word; and we should seek more and more to know the will of God and to profit by His providences in our lives, and to apply the knowledge gained, so that whether we eat, or drink, or sleep, or labor, we shall do all to the glory of God.—Z. '14:185.

The Future Inheritance of the New Creation

"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."—Romans 8:17.

THE DIVINE PROMISE is that the Kingdom of God will be amongst men—"under the whole heavens." The Scriptures state that both our Lord and the New Jerusalem, or glorious Kingdom of Messiah, are to come down from heaven to earth; and they call our Lord, therefore, Immanuel (God with us). During that thousand years God will in this sense dwell with men, walk with men. We already have this to some extent in our experience as Christians. God is with men, and Christ and the Church are with men, more or less contradicting and putting to shame the things of darkness of the present time.

But with all these suggestions it is not necessary for us to suppose that the Kingdom will be earthly. On the contrary, the assurance of the Scriptures is that the Church must become spirit beings before they can inherit the Kingdom: "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," while those of this class who have been previously dead will have an instantaneous resurrection; and thus we shall be "forever with the Lord"—not forever with the Lord on the earth, but always in the spirit condition. The angels are always in the heavenly condition, whether they are in heaven with the Father or on earth, and we shall always be in the heavenly condition—the spirit condition.

Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that there will be a restriction upon the Church, that she should remain in one place more than another. The intimation seems to be that, after she shall have experienced her change, the Church will be for a short time absent from the earth and in the presence of the Heavenly Father. We read in the forty-fifth Psalm that the Bride is to be brought into the presence of the Great King, arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold—"in raiment of needlework." The members of the Body of Christ will all be on the spirit plane, whether they are afar off or near the earth. This is what our Lord meant when He said, "I go to prepare a place for you"—in the Divine family. This particular place is one that has never been filled by any others.

The various orders of spirit beings created by the Father occupy each its own sphere. But there is no Church of Christ amongst these. The Church of Christ is invited to occupy a place next to the Lord, next to the Father, higher than all the other planes of spirit beings. At the first advent this place had not been prepared for the Church, although the Lord had it in mind. Our Lord ascended up on high to prepare this place. He did so by making an application of His merit to the Church class, by imputing His merit to them and permitting them to become participators with Him in His sufferings in the present time, that they might also become sharers with Him in the divine nature. Thus He prepared the way to enter into that highest of all spirit planes, the divine.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how it would be possible for the Lord and the Church to **remain** in the Father's presence and maintain the government of the earth. Perhaps this course is possible. Yet again, such would perhaps not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it would be necessary for them to be absent from the immediate presence of the heavenly Father and to approximate the earth, just as with Satan and his angels, who are in **tartarus**—cast down, separate because of sin. But Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the position which he has occupied is to be vacated. The entire Church is to be "caught up in the air" to be with the Lord forever—not necessarily in **tartarus**, but "forever with the Lord," that where He may be there they may be also, in harmony with the Divine will, to execute the Divine purposes.

Our thought, then, is that The Christ will be very closely associated with our earth, just as Satan's kingdom has been; and that they will be equally invisible to men, who will not see them during the thousand years, just as men have not seen Satan and his fallen angels. But as Satan and his angels have been doing an evil work, so Christ and His Church will be doing a powerful work, a good work, a work on the spirit plane; and associated with them will be various agencies, one of which undoubtedly will be the "great company." The members of Christ are the ones that are mentioned as "kings and priests unto God," who shall reign on the earth.

The Earthly Phase—Intelligent, Willing Men

Then there will be earthly agents of this Kingdom, just as Satan has his agents, who are sometimes under his control through ignorance and superstition, sometimes from mesmeric power, all of which will be removed at that time. But the agents of Christ will be intelligent and willing. At that time the Ancient Worthies will be "Princes in all the earth." All mankind will gradually come into fellowship with the Kingdom and, proportionately, indirectly, become associated with the Kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps a government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the Divine arrangements.

Thus the Kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually bringing them back to full perfection. We read that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." It will conquer everything before it. Nothing shall stop it. Every evil thing having been destroyed, every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth will be heard praising God. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess; and His Kingdom will be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth"—having accomplished its purpose.

The Kingdom will then cease, in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:24-28.) This does not mean that the Law of God will be disregarded, as it has been during the reign of sin and death. To meet the exigencies of the fallen condition of mankind, and to bring back as many as possible into harmony with the Divine arrangements, a special Kingdom will be established—the Messianic Kingdom—which will come in between the Divine government and mankind, because mankind in its weak condition will be unable to meet the requirements of the Divine Law. But when this Kingdom has restored mankind to perfection, it is the Divine purpose for Messiah to relinquish this subordinate Kingdom, which will merge into and become a part of the great Kingdom of Jehovah. **Justice** will then operate. There will be no place for mercy, and the Heavenly Father is not then represented as being a merciful King to His creatures. The Heavenly Father will then have made them perfect, so as to need no mercy, and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the Divine Government, and will be blessed in so doing.

The Christ To Be Associate Ruler of the Universe

Having terminated this work our Lord will not be without an occupation; but, according to the Scriptures, He will continue to be at the right hand of the Majesty on High—next to the Father. He will relinquish the oversight of the affairs of earth, and will assume again the general position as Associate-Administrator of the affairs of the Universe in connection with the Heavenly Father. We are not to suppose, however, that the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and administering Justice, for the equilibrium will be such that there will be no necessity for such a course. The whole Universe will go on practically without any head; and yet there will be the Head. The Son will be next to the Father in authority; and next to the Son will be the Bride. The work that will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us except in a very indefinite manner.

We understand by the power of telescopes that the suns have each a planetary system. If God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, it is only reasonable for us to infer that all the planets of the Universe will be inhabited, and that The Christ will behold the Heavenly Father and His wonderful Universe. The Power of the Heavenly Father is boundless, so far as we can understand. If after we have considered the hundred millions and more of suns and planetary systems beyond the power of human mind to contemplate—if then we realize that the Heavenly Father has made the position of Christ illimitable, and He has exalted the Bride of Christ with her Lord, then it is reasonable to assume that the work of Christ and the Church will be limitless, and that some blessed work for creatures not yet born is the work of all eternity. We simply wonder in amazement! We wonder at the greatness of His goodness to us, which is to lift us—the faithful few who make their calling and election sure—from our low condition to future glories interminable!—Z. '12:61, 62.

Meekness, Gentleness, Patience, Character

NEVER was there a more important moment for the Church than now, as respects the above listed elements of the Lord's spirit. When the great Enemy has special power because it is "the hour of temptation which shall try all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth," every soldier of the Cross must be more alert than ever. But let us put character and principle **first,** then patience, gentleness, meekness. As St. Paul wrote to Timothy, "In meekness, correcting those who oppose themselves."

Our **love** for the brethren, coupled with our **knowledge** of the testing strain they are under, will supply the needed incentive for the exercise and cultivation of the graces named. And let us remember, that this is our testing hour no less than theirs. The test to some may be false teachings; the test to others may be their positiveness and character in dealing with the error, or their love for the brethren and the gentleness with which they will seek to do all in their power to rescue them, **even though** they feel the task a hopeless one.—Heb. 6:3.

If we fail of love we are failing on the most important point of all. Hence it is important to each of us to take our stand **for** the right and **against** the wrong, but lovingly, gently, firmly.—Z. '09:140, 141.

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Obedience to God is the ultimate test by which all of his creatures on any plane will be tried. None but the obedient shall have eternal life. All of the disobedient shall be destroyed.—Z. '09:259.

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The New Creature begotten from above, wishes to be holy and to keep his tabernacle holy. He breathes by nature a holy atmosphere; anything contrary is poisonous to this Heavenly germ which must be fostered and nourished with the greatest care. That it may properly develop it is necessary that it be fed upon "the finest of the wheat"; it is necessary, too, that the very thoughts of the brain and the meditations of the heart should be conformed as nearly as possible to God's perfect standard for these New Creatures. To this end rich supply is furnished by the Heavenly Father, who begat us to this new nature.

The child of God who is slovenly or careless in the management of his earthly body is not living in accord with true holiness, is not properly developing this Heavenly "seed" begotten within him. These

New Creatures, so far as possible, should fellowship with one another. They are to seek to build one another up in the most holy faith. They are to remember that they are not to pull each other down, but are to endeavor to assist each other as far as they may be able.—Z. '15:228.

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We read, "Lust (desire) when it has conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." (Jas. 1:15.) Here we have a suggestion of the insidious character of sin; it does not stalk about openly in its horrible aspect, rather it starts in desire: it is prompted by selfishness of some kind, either in envy as in Cain's case or in ambition as in Satan's case. Small, refined, insidious are the beginnings of such desires, with no suggestion whatever of disloyalty to God or murder of our fellows. It is when these selfish desires and envyings, being unrepulsed, have gradually grown stronger and stronger, that, as the Apostle suggests, they conceive and bring forth to fruition, where they have life actually. Then the course is longer or shorter according to the individual or the circumstances, but the tendency of a desire that has conceived is to bring forth—to have the desire, the ambition, the envy, reach a consummation, and such a consummation is always sin. Such sin continued in, unrepented of, cherished, would surely lead on to death—the Second Death. How important, then, it is that we keep a close watch upon the desires of our hearts, and remember that out of the heart, out of the desires, proceed not only the good, kind, loving, generous sentiments, conceiving and bringing forth good deeds, kind words and proper conduct, but also out of the heart desires proceed the envyings and wrong and selfish ambitions which lead farther and farther away from the Lord and nearer and nearer to that condition which he would ultimately declare worthy of the Second Death. How appropriate the words of the poet:—

"I want a principle within
Of jealous, godly fear;
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near;
I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire;
To catch the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire."
—Z. '07:27, 28.

◆

An unfaithful steward will be punished for his unfaithfulness. Better that we should not enter into the Lord's service at all than that we should enter and then hold back, neglect our opportunities. If the one who had the five talents had held back, his simply doing nothing would have made him responsible. In showing how he dealt with the one who had the one talent, the Lord is emphasizing the matter the more. These talents represent our opportunities for service according to our several abilities. The one who had less ability was given less opportunity than the one who had more ability.

So with us. Some may have handicaps of various kinds. Some have more talents, or abilities; some have less. We cannot use talents we do not possess. It is required of a man that he be found faithful with what he has. This matter of using all the talents calls up the thought of full, complete loyalty of heart devotion. We should not say, I am doing better than somebody else, as the man with five talents might have thought had he used but three or four of them. But the one who is using his talents to the full capacity is specially pleasing to the Lord. Those who have two talents and use them faithfully received the same commendation as the one who has five talents and uses the five.—Z. '14:23.

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Looking at the deep workings of God's Plan in the light of what He tells us is **future,** as well as of what is past, how wonderful it is! Oh, the rich depths of God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover His dealings except as He is pleased to reveal His plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by His Spirit. Who knew this gracious Plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a Plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could be its Author. A Jew would never have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the **chief** blessings of the Promise. A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored **graft.** No, the Plan is clearly of God, and well illustrates both His goodness and His just severity. Of Him is all the Plan; through His power it is all brought to pass, and to Him be the glory forever. —Z. '14:270, 271.

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If we look out all over the world we find that practically nobody gets his rights—certainly nobody gets what he considers to be his rights, his dues, except the very humblest minded, who, overwhelmed with God's goodness and mercy, are ready to claim that they have already received of the Lord, and are continually receiving, far more than they deserve in every sense of the word. These are thankful and proportionately happy. The others, proportionately unthankful and unhappy, constitute the mass of the world of mankind,—including the majority of those who have named the name of Christ.—Z. '06:237.

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In designating His people "The sheep of My pasture" (Jeremiah 23:1), the Heavenly Father chose a very significant and fitting emblem of the kind of characters He is now seeking. The special characteristics of the sheep are meekness, docility, lack of self-confidence, and obedience to the shepherd in whom they fully trust. The true sheep will listen intently for the faintest sound of the shepherd's voice. It will respond quickly to his call; it will watch for his guidance. Let **us** manifest all these most desirable traits of character, and ever keep close to our Heavenly Shepherd and Guide, dwelling under his loving care and watchful eye. Those who thus abide in Christ are safe.

"Trusting Him, they cannot stray;
They can never, never lose their way."
—Z. '14:200.

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Old Corn Gems

No. 97

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

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Blessing God and Cursing Men

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."—James 3:8-10.

THESE words of the inspired Apostle are addressed to the "brethren"—not to the world. Indeed, the entire Epistle is addressed to the Church. The fact that in opening it James addresses "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," is not to the contrary of this. We are to remember that to the twelve tribes of Israel, the natural Seed of Abraham, pertained originally the great Covenant or promise of God made to Abraham. By natural heredity, then, God's offer or proposition to bless the world belonged to fleshly Israel, as the Divine instruments, if they would comply with the Divine conditions. But one of the Divine conditions was that they should have **the faith of Abraham,** and should not be considered the promised Seed of Abraham without that faith, since Abraham was to be the Father of the Faithful.

Our Lord and the Apostles, in the New Testament, set forth clearly how and why natural Israel, as a nation, was broken off from inheritance under that Covenant. The Apostle, representing the promise as an olive root, describes all Israelites as branches growing up out of that root, and tells us that many of the natural branches were broken off, the vast majority, and that only a remnant at the first advent were found possessed of the faith of Abraham, and accepted by our Lord as members of the house of sons.—John 1:12.

The Apostle further explains that the rejection of the unbelieving of natural Israel left the way open to engraft in the place of the broken-off branches some from amongst the Gentiles, possessed of the faith of Abraham. And this, we see, has been the work of the Gospel Age—grafting into the original root of promise believers from amongst the Gentiles, who were once without God and had no hope in the world, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, but are now brought nigh, united with Christ, and through him united with the Abrahamic root of promise, and inheritors of all its richness and fatness.—Eph. 2:12, 13; Rom. 11.

Thus we see that these Spiritual Israelites become the Israelites indeed, from the Divine standpoint, the actual inheritors of the Abrahamic Covenant or promise; although we see also, yet to be fulfilled, certain gracious earthly promises to the natural Seed of Abraham; nevertheless they have missed, have lost, as a nation, as a people, the great prize; as the Apostle declares, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."—Rom. 11:7.

So, then, the "twelve tribes" of Israel had promises made to them which apply not merely to themselves, but also and specially to Spiritual Israel, whom they typified; while the original election, or predestination, of God, respecting the Abrahamic Seed, that it should be 144,000 or 12,000 from each tribe, still stands; and consequently that each one accepted from among the Gentiles, and engrafted into this root of Abrahamic promise, is counted as taking the place of one of the broken-off branches of the various tribes.

By the time the Gospel Age shall have finished its work, a Spiritual Israel will have been found—"a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people"—showing forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light—neither one more nor one less than the original, elect, predetermined number—a natural Israelite having been "broken off" for each one from the Gentiles "grafted in." The Church is thus referred to in Revelation 7:3-8. And the sealing of the Church is spoken of as being so many from each of the tribes, with the intimation that all of these will have been "sealed in their foreheads" before the great time of trouble shall come upon the world.

So, then, the Epistle of James is to be understood as addressed to these true Israelites, engrafted into the root of promise, and taking the place of the natural Israelites. And to this agree the words of the Apostle Paul, "They are not all Israel which are of Israel." (Rom. 9:6, 7.) And again, "He is not a Jew which is a Jew outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart." (Rom. 2:28, 29.) And again, the words of our Lord in addressing his Church: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan."—Rev. 2:9; 3:9.

Our Lord recognized this same distinction between natural and true Israelites. When receiving Nathaniel he declared, "Behold, an Israelite indeed." These **two** Israels, of the flesh and of the spirit, were typified in Isaac and Ishmael, and again, as the Apostle declares, in Jacob and Esau. (Rom. 9:8-13, 22-33.) In each case the inheritor of the promise was the younger brother, illustrating that Spiritual Israel would be developed **after** natural Israel, and take its place as heir of the chief blessings mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant. However, we are to remember that a blessing was granted also in each case to the elder brother, in the types; and so it is in the antitypes. While God has appointed Christ to be the heir of all things, and has called the Church as his Bride, to be his joint-heir in all things, he has, nevertheless, provided that blessing shall flow from these to the earthly seed, and in turn through the latter to all the families of the earth.—Rom. 11:26-33.

Having thus definitely determined that the Apostle is addressing the Church, let us consider the astounding statement of our text, and seek to ascertain in what sense it should be understood; resolving that, should we find that in any sense or degree it applies to us individually, we will assuredly respond quickly to the spirit's teaching, and correct so evil a condition.

Christians Who Curse Men With Their Tongues

We may readily see how the Apostle means that God's people bless or praise his name with their tongues. They do so in prayer; they do so in their hymns of praise; they do so in declaring his Truth, and in witnessing to his providences on their behalf. In a word, we bless God with our tongues by showing forth his praises, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

But in what sense does the Apostle mean that Spiritual Israelites **curse men** with their tongues, and that so commonly, so generally prevalent as to require public reproof? Surely no Christian curses his fellow-man by oaths and profane swearing! But are there not other ways in which our tongues may be a **curse** and an **injury** to fellow-men? We are to remember that the meaning of our English word "curse" has somewhat altered in common usage within the last century, having very generally lost the sense of **injury** and assumed wholly the sense of swearing, profanity. In the Greek language different words are used when referring to a cursing oath, **viz., anathema,** and **anathematiso,** used ten times in the New Testament; and when referring to a spoken condemnation as a blight or curse, **viz., katara** and **kataraomai,** which signify condemnation, to speak against, to speak evil of, to injure. The latter is the word used by the Apostle James; hence his language really is—With the same tongue wherewith we praise and honor God, we do injury to fellow-men, by evil-speaking, slandering, etc.

Thus our Lord, using the same word, said, "Bless them that curse [speak evil of] you." The Apostle Paul, using the same word, admonishes God's people to "Bless and curse not"—speak favorably of others, but do not speak injuriously of them. Again, we are told that our Lord **cursed** (the same Greek word) the fig tree, saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth"—he injured it, he made a declaration unfavorable to its future development. Thus also the Apostle declares that the Jews under the Law were under a **curse**—not that the Law was evil, but that, because of imperfections of the flesh, the Israelites came under the **condemnation** (curse) of the Law. He declares also that "Christ hath redeemed us [formerly Jews] from the curse [condemnation] of the Law, being made a curse for us"—having suffered for us the full condemnation or blight which the Law imposed upon the transgressor. (Gal. 3:10-13.) He illustrated the same thought in connection with the word "curse," when he declares that garden land which had been overgrown with thorns and briars is "nigh unto cursing"—not ready for profanity, but for **condemnation,** as unfit for tillage, until burned over and its weeds exterminated.—Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14; Mark 11:21; Heb. 6:8.

Having thus before our minds the real word, and its signification as used by the Apostle, we see that while **curse** is a proper enough translation of the original, the whole difficulty is that present-day common usage and common education have largely hidden from sight this signification of the word. Similarly the word **evil** has lost its original breadth of meaning, and is almost invariably considered to signify immorality, badness, wickedness; whereas in its breadth of meaning it may be used to refer to anything that is undesirable, not good, such as calamities, etc.

No Evil to Which the Lord's People Are More Exposed

Looking at the Apostle's statement from this standpoint, we see clearly that his charge is applicable to Christian people of today to an alarming extent. How many there are who do injury with their tongues to their fellow-creatures, who use the same tongue in offering praise to God. We know of no evil to which God's consecrated people are more exposed than to this one. With many it is as natural to gossip as to breathe. They do it unconsciously. We have even known people who took cognizance of the Scriptural injunction against slander and evil-speaking, who were so utterly confused on the subject, and so unaware of their own conduct, that they would declare their horror of speaking a slander in the very same breath in which they utter slanders. We mention this in proof that this evil is so ingrained in fallen human nature as to elude the notice of the new nature sometimes for years—and thus escapes the correction in righteousness which the Lord's Word directs, and which all who are truly the Lord's people desire.

Many are the peculiar subterfuges which the fallen nature will use, in its attempt to stifle the voice of conscience and yet maintain the use of this channel of evil—long after it has been driven from evil practices which are less common, less popular, more generally recognized as sinful.

(1) It will say, I mean no harm to anybody; but I must have something to talk about, and nothing would be so interesting to friends and neighbors as something which has more or less of a gossipy flavor (scandal) connected with it. But is evil-speaking, slander, any the more proper on this account for the children of the light? By no means. Hence it is that the Scriptures instruct us, "Let your conversation be such as becometh saints"; "Let your speech be with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"; "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is **good,** to the use of **edifying,** that it may minister grace unto the hearers."—Phil. 1:27; Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29.

But the scandal-monger, however refined his methods and words, well knows that so far from the scandal ministering grace to the hearer, it ministers evil; that the hearer is impelled by the forces of his fallen human nature to go quickly and tell the scandal further; true or false, he knows not and heeds not. It has kindled in his heart a flame of carnal sentiment which issues from his lips to "set on fire the course of nature" in others, similarly weak through the fall. The fallen nature feasts and revels in just such things, feeling the more liberty to do so because they delude themselves that thus they are moralizing—preaching against sin, and that in thus discussing and impliedly denouncing the **said-to-be** transgressions of another, they are mentioning matters abhorrent to their righteous souls. Alas! poor, weak, fallen humanity's reasonings are seriously defective when the Lord's counsels in righteousness are ignored.

Much for Discussion on the Subject of the Riches of God's Grace

As for the point that there would be little else to talk about if scandals were thoroughly eliminated from Christian conversation, and all were to abide strictly by the Apostle's injunction, "Speak evil of no man," we answer: Is there not a wide scope for conversation amongst Christian people on the subject of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, expressed in the exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word? In these things we have indeed that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but which adds also to the grace of the speaker. It showers blessing on every hand, so far as the "new creature" is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes, appetites.

This is what the Apostle had in mind, evidently, when he said that the Lord's people should "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." And a heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of Truth, the spirit of the Master, will be sure to overflow that which is within, for, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." An evil mouth, therefore, a mouth which does injury to others, either to fellow-members of "the Body of Christ," or to those who are without, indicates an evil heart, implies that the heart is not pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 12:34; 5:8.

(2) Another excuse for gossip about other men's matters is offered by others who say: I can talk about religious matters to those who are religiously inclined, but when I am with worldly people, or with professors of religion who take no interest in religious themes, I must be agreeable and accommodating, and must at least **hear** their gossip and news; and if I do not share in such conversation I would be considered very peculiar, and my company would not be desired. Yes, we answer; but this is to be one of the peculiarities of the "saints." They are not only to be different from the world, but different also from the nominal professors of religion. Their religion is not to be merely on the surface, and on one day of the week, and under a certain suit of clothes; but is to be of the heart, related to all the affairs of life, for every day and every moment. To follow strictly the Divine injunction will indeed separate these from some who are now their friends and who love such evil things—forbidden us who have become sons of God and who have received of his spirit of sonship, the spirit of Love.

The Way to Glory, Honor and Immortality a Narrow Way

That our Lord understood and taught that the way to glory, honor and immortality is a narrow one is evident. "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And again—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be who find it." If, therefore, your failure to be an entertaining visitor, neighbor, friend, is because of your fidelity as a "new creature" to the law of Christ, Love—which "worketh no ill to his neighbor," either in word or deed—then indeed you have cause for rejoicing, because you are suffering a little, experiencing a loss, for Christ's sake, for righteousness' sake. The loss may at first seem heavy, but if you endure it for Christ's sake, in obedience to his righteous law of Love, you will soon be able to say with the Apostle that such losses are "light afflictions," not worthy to be compared with the offsetting blessings.—Phil. 3:7, 8; 2 Cor. 4:17.

Your cause for rejoicing is that you have the Lord's promise that such suffering shall work out for your good. Companionship with those who are not seeking to walk according to the mind of the spirit, but according to the common "course of this world," is injurious to the saints, to those who are seeking to walk in harmony with the new mind. They are far better off without such worldly companions and friends, and in proportion as they are separated from these they will find closer fellowship with the Lord himself and with his Word, and with all who are true members of his Body, and under the direction of his Spirit.

It is in harmony with this that the Scriptures declare, in so many words, that the friendship of this world signifies enmity against God. (Jas. 4:4.) God has purposely placed the matter in such a position that his people must take their choice, and lose either the Divine friendship and fellowship, or the worldly friendship and fellowship; because those things which the Lord loves are distasteful to the worldly, and those things which the worldly love, evil deeds and evil thoughts, evil-speaking, are an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and those who love and practice such things lose his fellowship—they are not of his Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—Rom. 8:9.

(3) Another way by which some otherwise good Christian people avoid this question, and justify themselves in this common fault of humanity, is by confining themselves (as they think) to the truth. But they never know how frequently their gossip-loving natures pervert their judgment and lead them to accept as truth, things respecting which they have little or no knowledge. Nor are such anxious to know more, after they have circulated a slander with their stamp of verity on it. To find it untrue would prove them "false witnesses" and put them to trouble to correct the lie. The pride of the natural mind objects and refuses to believe the truth under such circumstances. Thus one evil leads to another.

How the Depraved Taste Hedges Behind Conscience

Such will say, "Oh, I never tell anything for **truth** until I positively know it to be true—of my own observation, my own personal knowledge. Anything that I do not know of myself to be true I am always careful to so state, and say, I have heard thus and so, or, I am told thus and so; I do not vouch for the truth of it myself. Thus I am sure that I always avoid speaking evil of anyone." Perhaps there is no more common delusion on this subject than is thus expressed. The depraved taste hedges itself behind conscience, and declares that it is always right to speak the truth, and hence God cannot have meant that speaking the truth would be slander, but that in condemning evil-speaking and slander, as works of the flesh and the Devil, he must have meant the speaking of that which is false, untrue.

This is a great mistake. A slander is equally a slander, whether it is true or whether it is false, and is so regarded, not only in the law of God, but also in the laws of civilized men. True, in human law, if a suit were brought for slander, if it were proven that the charges made by the slanderer had some basis of fact, that would probably be considered by the Court and jury an extenuating circumstance, and would probably very much reduce the amount of the verdict for damages. A slander is anything which is uttered with the intention of injury to another, whether true or false, and the laws of men agree with the law of God, that such injury to another is wrong.

In other words, Divine and human laws agree that a first wrong does not justify a second wrong. Human law says, If a wrong has been committed, the Courts are open to the injured one to seek redress or the punishment of the evil doer; but the injured one shall not be permitted to take the remedy into his own hands, either by making an assault with physical force or by the use of the more subtle weapon, the tongue, to assassinate his reputation with the poisoned stiletto of envy and malice. True, many slanderers are never prosecuted; true also, the newspapers of the United States many times escape heavy damages for libelous slander by the plea that they do not publish the defamations as of malice, but simply as news, which, they claim, properly belong to the public, as in the cases of politicians who are seeking the franchises of the people for positions of public trust. Then again, public men, knowing that much of the false statements by the opposition press will be properly credited as falsehoods, consider it good policy to let any ordinary slanders go unchallenged in the Courts. The effect is a gradual growth of slander among the people, sure to work evil to themselves and to their institutions; for government officers and courts and everybody of influence coming under such slanders (generally, we believe, untrue) lose their influence for good over the lower classes, who are thus being helped along to greater lawlessness day by day, and preparing for the period of anarchy which the Scriptures tell us is near at hand.

The Law of Love Commands That We "Speak Evil of No Man"

But the Law of God, the Law of Christ, goes much further and deeper into such matters, naturally, than do the laws of men; for it deals not with men, but with the "new creatures in Christ Jesus"—transformed by the renewing of their minds, and under special Covenant relationship, and bound by the law of Love, which "worketh no ill to his neighbor," under any circumstances, under any provocation, but, on the contrary, returns "good for evil," "blessing for cursing."

The Law of Love commands **silence** to all who acknowledge that law and the Law-Giver, saying, **"Speak evil of no man."** (Titus 3:2.) It goes further than this and declares against evil thoughts, evil suspicions, evil surmisings against neighbors. It declares that love filling our hearts will not only hinder evil conduct and injurious words, but will even prevent evil thoughts—"Love **thinketh** no evil." The new creature possessing it can be convinced of evil only by indisputable proofs. Indeed, to impress this subject and its importance in his sight, the Great Teacher declares to the pupils in his school—With what judgment ye judge others, I will judge you. (Matt. 7:1.) And again he tells them to pray to the Father—"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matt. 6:12.) Again he declares, If **at heart** ye treasure up resentment against others, the Heavenly Father will not forgive you.——Matt. 18:35.

Ah! indeed a Christian after the Lord's pattern, a graduate of the school of Christ and prepared to teach others, is one who not only outwardly, but inwardly also, is clean—separated, washed by the water of Divine instruction, from the meanness, the filthiness of the flesh. He is no longer the slave of sin, controlled by the desires and weaknesses of his fallen flesh and its spirit of the world, bearing fruits unto unrighteousness—anger, malice, hatred, strife, slander, evil-speaking. (Col. 3:8; 1 Pet. 2:1, 2.) From his high standpoint of appreciation of the Divine law, the advanced Christian sees that in the Lord's sight hatred is murder, slander is **assassination**, and the destruction of a neighbor's good name is **robbery** and rapine. And any of these things done in the Church, among the professed people of God, is doubly evil—the assassination and robbery of a **brother.**—Compare 1 John 3:15 and Matt. 5:21, 22.

The Natural Heart Is Deceitful and Desperately Wicked

To utter a defamatory or injurious remark against another, and then to add, "I do not know whether it is true or not," is to show that the speaker is exercised by an evil spirit and not by the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of love—he wishes to injure or curse his fellow-creature, is anxious to do so. He would feel restrained to some extent from telling what he knew to be absolutely untrue, but delights to speak evil, and is glad to know that he may roll it as a sweet morsel over his tongue, and hence speaks of even those scandals which he **does not know to be true,** and attempts to excuse himself with such an apology as the above.

Verily, it is with force that the Scriptures declare that the natural heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Those who thus speak, and thus attempt to justify their misconduct, have either never entered the school of Christ, or are as yet only in the infant class, and do not know that theirs is the spirit of murder, and not the spirit of brotherly love. Oh! that all true Christians might learn the scope of this law of Love, in its relationship not only to God, but also to fellowmen; what a bridling of tongues it would mean, what a carefulness of speech! As David said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." And he who watches his tongue is putting a detective upon his deceitful heart and can the better know it and master it, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—Jer. 17:9; Psa. 39:1; Matt. 12:34.

The only exception to this rule, "Speak evil of no man," would come in where we might know of an absolute necessity for making known an evil—where the relating of the evil would be contrary to our heart's wishes, and only mentioned because of necessity—because of love for others who, if not informed, might be injured. For instance, the law of the land demands that, if we know of murder having been committed, it shall not be considered slander, but on the contrary be considered duty, to make known to the proper officers of the law the **facts** (not suspicions) which have come under our observation. Likewise, if we knew of some weakness in a brother or sister, and realized that another brother or sister was about to be placed in a dangerous position by reason of that weakness, it might become our duty to make known, either to the individual or congregation liable to be injured, so much of our knowledge of **facts** (not suspicions) as might be necessary to guard against injury through the weakness mentioned. But this would not be speaking evil, but, on the contrary, would be speaking with a good motive, with the intention of preserving the one party from extraordinary temptation, and of preserving the other party from injury. And before anything should be said on the subject we should most positively satisfy our own consciences that our motive in speaking is a good one, and not an evil one: that we are about to use our tongue to bless, and not to injure. And even then, prompted by the spirit of love and kindness toward the weak brother, as well as toward the others, we should avoid mentioning one solitary item that would not be necessary to the object in view.

"Doth a Fountain Send Forth at the Same Opening Bitter Water and Sweet?"

But some will object to limiting this liberty to cases of positive **knowledge,** and urge that absolute knowledge generally being small little could be said. We answer that this is in line with the Divine law —"Love thy neighbor as **thyself."** You would not want your neighbor to use brain and tongue in evil surmises and slander against you: and you should not do so to him. The law of the land does not demand that you should tell one word more than you **know** (of personal knowledge) against your neighbor: it does not ask your suspicions and evil surmisings. And on the contrary, the law of the Lord commands that all under the law of love shall not utter one solitary suspicion against a neighbor; and that if suspicion beyond knowledge is **forced** upon the mind by associated circumstances, the new mind shall promptly, with its native benevolence, counterbalance the suspicions by suggestions of the possibility of misinformation or misinterpretation and always give the apparently guilty the benefit of the doubt.

Another will object—"Oh! I could never waste so much time in getting at **facts.** Life is too short! Why, I would have no time at all left for my own business, if I carefully hunted up the **facts** so as always to speak from **knowledge** and never from hearsay!"

Just so! and the lesson to you should be to follow the Scriptural rule—"Speak evil of no man!"

(1) Because you have not the time to get at the facts, and quite probably also lack the ability to judge impartially, if you had **all** the facts before you.

(2) Because, if you have the Spirit of Christ, love, dwelling in you richly, you will prefer to tell no one the facts, even if you have the chain of evidence complete. You will loathe the matter the more in proportion as the known facts are unfavorable. What, then, must be the condition of those who have itching ears for scandal and of those whose tongues delight in scandal as a sweet morsel, and are anxious to scatter an evil report of which they have no knowledge—only prejudiced hearsay? The most generous view possible of such is that they have **little** of the Spirit of Christ; that they are deficient in brotherly love and have never truly learned "the golden rule."

The Apostle inquires, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same opening bitter water and sweet?" The form of his question implies the answer, No; it is either good water only, or brackish water only. He evidently wishes to suggest that we apply the same rule to our hearts and mouths: How is it possible if our hearts have been renewed that our mouths utter loving sweetness to God and bitter acrimony, envy, hatred, strife, towards or respecting our fellowmen?

The Treasure of the New Mind in an Earthen Vessel

There is but one way of understanding the foregoing question Scripturally. It is expressed by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 4:7), "We have this treasure [the new heart, the new mind, the new nature] in an earthen vessel." Not that Christians are of two natures, for that thought is contrary to the science of the Bible. No mixture of natures can be recognized; hence it was that our human natures were justified through faith in Jesus' blood and a renouncement of sin and a consecration to death, that instead we might have spiritual natures and become "new creatures in Christ Jesus." The new creature, however, is as yet only in embryo, possessing only the new mind which dwells in and proposes to regulate and govern the mortal bodies, which are considered dead so far as the will of the flesh is concerned.

When, therefore, our mouths are speaking forth heartfelt praise to God, who hath blessed us, lifted our feet from the horrible pit, and the miry clay, and placed us upon the Rock Christ Jesus, and has put a new song into our mouth, our praise implies that the new mind is controlling at such a time, that the new heart is overflowing in the mortal body, and going forth through the lips to the blessing and edification, the comfort and encouragement of those who hear. Thus the fountain in our heart is sending forth sweet waters, carrying with them life, blessing, refreshment. But when our tongues speak evil of any, whether it be true or false, it implies that the new nature is, temporarily at least, overcome by the old nature; it implies that another fountain is now operating and using the tongue, the mouth, in issuing forth the words of malice or hatred or envy or strife or reproach or evil speaking of any kind—cursing or injuring others in any degree, great or small.

This implies that the flesh is not being kept under, kept dead, kept buried, kept out of sight. Such a condition, therefore, implies slow spiritual development or retrogression—falling away on the part of the "new creature." All such should remember, as the Apostle Paul declares, "The time past of our lives sufficeth us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. Again, he says, "Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."—1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 6:13.

"Purge Out the Old Leaven"

From this point of view we may console ourselves if, in looking backward, we perceive that in our own cases from the same mouth has proceeded praise to God and injury and defamation and slander and evil-speaking, or any of these evil propensities, toward our fellow-creatures. It does not, therefore, prove that our hearts were not truly justified, and sanctified by the holy Spirit of adoption; it does not prove that we are not sons of God and partakers of his Spirit. It does prove, however, that we are in a sadly improper condition—spiritually sick and in need of taking a purgative; as the Apostle expresses it, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven [malice, etc.], that ye may be a new [unadulterated, pure] lump" or loaf—proper representatives of the Body of Christ.—1 Cor. 5:7.

We may know assuredly that, until the "new creature" gains a thorough victory over the flesh, we will not be winners of the great prize which is promised only "to him that overcometh." The overcoming, however, will be not in the **perfecting of the flesh,** but in the **perfecting of the heart**—the will, the intentions. As for the blemishes of the flesh, some of them, undoubtedly, despite every effort on our part to eradicate them, will continue with us so long as we are in the flesh. The perfection which is to be hoped for, therefore, and aimed at and expected and gained by the overcomers, is the perfection of the will, heart, intentions—"Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God."

Moreover, our physical weaknesses and defects not only vary in kind but in intensity. Some are by nature more inclined to gentleness, kindness, etc., others, until accepted of Christ, may have very uncouth, coarse, rude, rough earthen vessels. And while the influence of the treasure within, the "new mind," will be sure in any case to exercise a modifying and transforming effect upon the earthen vessel, we cannot expect as much of a change in some as in others. We cannot expect as complete a correction in righteousness in the outward man, where coarseness, rudeness, unkindness are, so to speak, bred in the bone and fibre, as we might expect in one born to fine sensibilities.

While recognizing this difference of "earthen vessels," we, of course, must use our best endeavors each to correct his own. We are to remember that our relationship to one another in the Body of Christ is not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; hence, as the Apostle declares, we know one another no longer according to the flesh, with its weaknesses, imperfections and ungainly and ungraceful natural tendencies. We know each other only according to the Spirit, according to the intentions, according to the heart—as "new creatures," not as old creatures.—2 Cor. 5:16.

This will lead us to be very pitiful of one another's imperfections of the flesh, so long as we have the assurance that the flesh does not represent our brother's real self, his mind, his will. We are, therefore, to be gentle toward all, "kindly affectioned one toward another," so that so far from desiring to wound one another, or to injure one another, or to devour one another with our tongues, we shall sympathize with each other, do each other good, and, by words of grace and comfort, or by admonition and reproof spoken in love, may "build one another up in the most holy faith"—in the likeness of our Lord and Master.

Proceeding with this subject, the Apostle points out that there are two kinds of wisdom, a heavenly and an earthly, and that all of the Lord's people should discern these, and should see to it that theirs is the heavenly. The Apostle's intimation is that there may be some with the Church, who may have counted themselves in the Church, who may have associated themselves with the Church from worldly-wise motives—some who have caught sight of the fact that there is a reasonableness and a wisdom in the teachings of the Scriptures which they admire and which they can turn, perhaps, to their own advantage. These, he implies, will be inclined to be heady and to make a show of their wisdom, and to be "puffed up" by it, and while outwardly acknowledging the propriety of the Christian graces, brotherly-kindness, gentleness, meekness, patience, love, they have in their hearts bitter envyings and strife—strife to have name and fame—envying those who may seem to them to have more of these.

These, the Apostle intimates, will find it difficult, yea, impossible, to avoid **cursing** (speaking evil of, injuring) the brethren. It will be so natural to them to do so that they cannot avoid it, because they have not pure hearts—they have not regenerated hearts. If their hearts ever were regenerated, they have returned like the sow to wallowing in the mire—like the dog to his vomit. The Apostle's advice to such as find that they have in their hearts envious and bitter feelings, is that they have no cause to glory or to boast, but on the contrary should acknowledge that, having these evil conditions in the heart, they are not Christians at all, and they should cease to lie against the truth—cease to act fraudulently, hypocritically—cease to continue to claim to have renewed hearts, sanctified in Christ Jesus.

He tells such plainly that their wisdom, their knowledge is not of God, is not of the holy Spirit—"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish: for, where envy and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work [may be anticipated]."—Jas. 3:15, 16.

It seems evident that although the Apostle James' denunciation applies to any professing to be Israelites indeed, he nevertheless is specially aiming his remarks at those who profess to be teachers in the Church, to have **wisdom** to a considerable degree. And his words remind us of the words of the Apostle Paul; when speaking of the various gifts distributed to the Church, he seemingly points out the dangers of those of large knowledge, and, as an illustration of this principle which James presents, he says:—

"Though I Speak With the Tongues of Men and of Angels and Have Not Love"

Though I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love, it would imply that I had become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, making a noise indeed, but having no feeling respecting the matter myself—I have neither part nor lot with those who possess the Spirit of Christ. Although I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, and have not Love, I am nothing; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not Love, it profiteth me nothing.—1 Cor. 13:1-8.

Thus the Apostle points out distinctly that knowledge and oratory are not the most vital test, but that Love, permeating the heart and extending out through all the course of life, and actuating and operating our mortal bodies, is the real test—the real proof of our Divine relationship. He points out that those who had received gifts of God before they had come into a proper relationship to God might become sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and thus become "nothing," if they lose the love, if they lose the Spirit of Christ; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It is well for the Lord's people to take particular note of these Divine instructions from two of the chiefest of the Apostles, and to remember that, valuable though they be, neither **oratory** nor **knowledge** is to be considered amongst the "brethren" as sure proofs of their being in the right way, nor that their influence might not be injurious instead of helpful. The **leading** characteristic to be looked for in everyone accepted as a servant of the Church, to minister in holy things, should be first of all the spirit of Love. We do not mean to say that knowledge and ability should be entirely ignored, but we do mean to say that these should be considered of secondary and not of primary importance, as is always the tendency.

Select from among yourselves, holy men, full of the holy Spirit, that they may have the charge of the spiritual interests of the different companies of the Lord's people. And for a Divine explanation of how this holy Spirit will manifest itself, of the qualities, therefore, that are to be looked for in the servants of the Church, see 1 Cor. 13:4-8; also 1 Pet. 1:22, 23; 2 Pet. 1:1-13. For their own good, as well as for the good of the Church, all who, having other qualifications, give evidence of being puffed up and of desiring to lord it over God's heritage (the Church), or who manifest envy, strife, bitterness, evil-speaking—these should be passed by, as giving evidence of having the wrong spirit, that cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. They are unsafe teachers, and are likely to do more harm than good, with whatever knowledge they may possess.

"The Wisdom That Cometh From Above," Etc.

Continuing, the Apostle leaves no doubt respecting his meaning, for he distinctly outlines the course and fruitage of heavenly wisdom, saying, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure"—truthful, honest, sincere, not put on, not used as a garment of light to deceive and to cover up selfishness, malice, hatred, strife; it makes no compromises with sin, impurity, in any shape or form.

It is "peaceable."—So far from being a quarrelsome, bickering disposition, the "new mind" desires peace; it will "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints," but it will not contend simply from a love of contention, a love of strife; on the contrary, the new mind is peaceably inclined, would prefer, so far as possible, to yield a non-essential point in a controversy; it loves its opponents and sympathizes with their difficulties.

It is "gentle"—not rude or coarse, not rough in action or word or tone; and if the earthen vessel through which it speaks have these rudenesses ingrained by nature, the "new nature" regrets them, strives against them, and seeks to conquer them; and where they do injury to others is ready, willing, glad to apologize, and to remove the smart.

It is "easy to be entreated"—easy of approach, not haughty, not disdainful, not hard or cruel; yet it is firm on matters of principle; principles cannot be bended or modified; they belong to God. But while affirming the principles, this spirit of wisdom points out its own willingness to moderation, by asknowledging any good features in its opponent, and by pointing out the reason why no modification is possible in relation to Divine laws and principles.

It is "full of mercy and good fruits."—It delights in all things prompted by love and kindness; it takes pleasure in doing for others; it takes pleasure, not only in showing mercy to dumb animals under its care, but it especially delights in mercy in dealing with brethren in respect to their faults. It is merciful also in the family—not over-exacting, but generous, kind, benevolent. It is generous also with opponents, and those who are contentious—not wishing to push a victory, even for the truth, to such a point as would be injurious, hurtful, unmerciful to the antagonist.

It is "without partiality."—It loves the good, the true, where these are found; and opposes the untrue, the impure and the unholy, whether found amongst friends or enemies. Its justice is of the strictest kind, tempered with mercy; it will not approve a fault in a brother, because he is a brother, but would reprove the same with gentleness and meekness, remembering the liability of all to the assaults of the world, the flesh and the Devil. It will not fail to see a virtue in an enemy, nor hesitate to acknowledge it. Truth is its standard, not prejudice, not partyism, not sectarianism.

It is "without hypocrisy."—It is thoroughly candid; it needs not to feign love, because it is love; it needs not to put on a kindly exterior and to smother feelings of wrath and envy and strife, for it is without envy, without strife. Such works of the flesh and of the Devil have, by the grace of God, been seen to be earthly, sensual, devilish, and have been repudiated, and the heart has been justified, cleansed, sanctified to God, renewed in thought, intention, will, and is now full of the treasure of the holy Spirit.

With these thoughts before our minds, let us all, dear readers, more earnestly than ever, guard against the old nature, and its insidious attempts to gain control over our tongues. Let us, more and more, seek to appreciate, in ourselves and in others, this heavenly wisdom, whose operation is so forcefully presented by the Apostle. The more important our members, the more influential, the more earnestly ought we to strive to keep them in full subjection to the Lord, as **his** servants. Our feet are useful members, consecrated to the Lord; we may use them in many errands of mercy, to the glory of his name and to the profit of his people. Our hands are likewise useful, if thoroughly consecrated to the Lord's service. Our ears are also useful in his service, to hear for him, to refuse to hear the evil, and thus to approve evil, and to set a good example to others. Our eyes are a great blessing from the Lord, and they also are to be kept from evil, from the lust of the eye and the pride of life, and are to be instruments or servants of righteousness, in seeing the good, in appreciating the good, and in assisting the good, and in helping us to know the will of our God.

"The Tongue Set on Fire of Gehenna"

But of all our members the most influential is the tongue. The tongue's influence exceeds that of all our other members combined. To control it, therefore, in the Lord's service, is the most important work of the Lord's people in respect to their mortal bodies and the service of these rendered to the Lord. A few words of love, kindness, helpfulness—how often have such changed the entire course of a human life! Yea! How much they have had to do with moulding the destiny of nations! And how often have evil words, unkind words, slanderous words, done gross injustice, assassinated reputations, etc.! As the Apostle declares, the tongue is capable of setting on fire the whole course of nature—awakening passions, strifes, enmities, at first unthought of. No wonder he declares such tongues "set on fire of **Gehenna**"—the Second Death!

The public servants of the Church are to some extent specially its "tongues," and what an influence they wield for good or for evil, in the blessing and upbuilding of the Lord's people, or for their injury —cursing! How necessary that all the tongue-servants of the Lord's Body be such, and such only, as are of his spirit! Their influence not only extends to those who are in the Church, but in considerable measure they are mouthpieces heard outside. And the same principle applies to every individual member of the Church, in his use of his member, his tongue. He may use it wisely or unwisely, with heavenly wisdom or with earthly wisdom. He may use it for strife, and tearing down the faith and character of the brethren, in overthrowing love and confidence, or he may use it in building up these graces of the Spirit.

How many have proved the truth of the Apostle's words—that the tongue has great possibilities for defiling the whole Body, the Church, and setting on fire the course of nature, by stirring up the evil passions and propensities of the fallen nature! How few amongst the Lord's people have conquered the tongue to the extent of bringing it into subjection to the will of God, that they may minister good, and only good, to all with whom they come in contact! Let us, dearly beloved, be fully resolved that by Divine grace (promised to assist us) we shall witness great progress in our control of this most important member of our bodies, bringing the same into full subjection and obedience and service to the King of kings and Lord of lords—to him "who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."

—Z. '10: 339-345.

What Lack I Yet?

Mark 10:17-27. (Matt. 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30.)

Golden Text:—"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."—Matt. 6:33.

WE have in this lesson an illustration of the great difficulty of getting a full, fair view of one's self. Hence the value of every applied test of character. These tests open our eyes to our real condition of heart as we could not otherwise realize them. Sometimes the test comes in the shape of a searching question which leads the thoughtful to a close scanning of his ways—as, for instance, the Lord's repeated question to Peter—"Lovest thou me?" Sometimes it is a direct showing of the line of duty through difficulties and dangers from which the flesh shrinks; and sometimes it comes in tempests and storms of persecution which prove the heart's loyalty to God and its powers of endurance. But in whatever shape the tests of character are applied to us we have reason to be thankful for their good office in the better acquainting us with our own hearts.

This young man who came to Jesus inquiring, What lack I yet? was, evidently, one who was in many respects very exemplary. From his youth up he had carefully observed the divine law, and had sought scrupulously to fashion his character in conformity to its precepts. And now he had heard the teachings of the Galilean claimant to the Messiahship and had observed the testimony of his miracles —the power of God witnessing to the truth of his claims. And, notwithstanding the persecuting spirit of the rulers and teachers in Israel against the Lord and all who believed in the validity of his claims, he came to him openly, saluted him with that reverence due to so great a teacher, and sincerely inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life.

The inquiry, especially under these circumstances, indicated most commendable candor, thoughtful consideration, and realization that by the deeds of the law no flesh had yet gained the life it promised for obedience, and faith in the new and wonderful teacher to show him more perfectly the way of life. All of these were most promising indications of discipleship. "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him." A life of moral purity, sincerity, thoughtfulness and truth had left no marks of degradation but had given to the countenance that frankness and nobility which always accompanies a transparent character.

The Lord's reference to the law brought the quick response, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" He was anxious for a perfect conformity to the will of God: and so anxious that he manifested his willingness to bear reproach for it in thus coming to Jesus. That was a long step in the direction of full consecration to God. His heart was very nearly right; but still there was a lack: his attitude, although he did not realize it, was not that of entire consecration to the will of God: and in answer to his sincere inquiry the Lord sought to show him wherein he lacked, what was the weak spot in his character.

This he did by applying a test which instantly discovered to him the fact that he loved self more than either God or his neighbor: consequently that he had failed to keep the law in those two important principles upon which hang all the law and the prophets—viz., supreme love to God, which manifests itself in singleness of purpose to do his will and please him; and love to the neighbor as to self, which in the present age implies self-sacrifice and daily cross-bearing in imitation of Christ.

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." No doubt the heart of Jesus was sad also when he saw the blight of selfishness and self-will attacking that promising half-blown rose of character. A crisis had come in the young man's life which he failed to pass successfully, and thenceforth the beauty of character so far attained must surely decline. We hear nothing of his subsequent conversion, but in all probability he remained in sympathy with the Jewish teachers and partook more and more of their spirit of opposition to Christ and his teaching.

"And Jesus . . . saith unto his disciples, . . . How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" He had been showing the way into the Kingdom—the way, not for this young man only, but for every man who would lay up the treasure of such a hope. Every aspirant to the Kingdom must travel this narrow way of sacrifice, and with one motive of supreme love to God and desire to bless his neighbor as himself. He must go, and sell all that he has and give to the poor, and take up his cross daily and follow Christ. The simple significance of this to all of us is a life of loving devotion to the good of others, along the lines of God's plan and prompted primarily by love to him. "Go, sell all that thou hast"—all thy possessions, all thy time, all thy reputation, all that hitherto has been dear to thee: and then, having dropped all the weights of earthly ambition, take up thy cross and follow Christ: for the labor of love and sacrifice for others will not bring its due reward of gratitude in this age, but, on the contrary, it will bring ingratitude and even persecution, as it did to our Master. But, no matter, "the servant is not above his lord:" like the apostles who followed closely in his footsteps, we should be able to say, "Being reviled, we bless: being defamed, we entreat; being persecuted, we suffer it."

It should be considered also that to follow Christ is not to make unwise disposition of our possessions and talents, but, as wise and faithful stewards, to use them to the best possible advantage in his service. To feed the poor would not necessarily mean to feed the hungry with the bread that perisheth, but first, rather, to feed the spiritually hungry with the bread of life. In a word, it signifies to spend self for the highest good of others, not looking for any present reward, except a sense of the Master's approval.

The Lord indicates that though it is very difficult for the rich to enter into the Kingdom, it is not impossible. With men, it might seem impossible that a man could have riches and use them conscientiously:—be a sacrificer. Riches of any kind—whether of money, or reputation, or friends, or anything upon which the heart has been set, form such barriers to the formation of truly noble characters—after God's own heart—that the natural man, unaided by divine grace, cannot surmount them. But, nevertheless, however insufficient we may feel in ourselves, we need only to remember that "our sufficiency is of God:" it is

"When thy weakness leaneth
On his might, all seems light."

No matter how heavy may seem the cross, how severe the trial, or how weak we feel in consideration of it, if we simply and sincerely surrender ourselves to God, he will carry us through: with him, with his grace and guidance, it is possible for the weakest and the most severely tempted and tried to make their calling and election sure. He will infuse courage into fainting souls; he will apply the balm of his consolation to wounded hearts; he will grant wisdom to him that asketh it; and he will furnish the armor of God to every true soldier of the cross. O blessed promise! with God it is possible to enable even those tempted with the subtle influences of riches of any kind to run the race of self-sacrifice with diligence and patience to the end.

Then let the sincere inquiry of every child of God be, "What lack I yet?" Surely there is none so perfect that he lacks nothing. And when in answer to our inquiring prayer the Lord applies some test to prove our standing before him, let us bravely determine that by his grace we will not draw back; for it is written, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" and again, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."—Heb. 10:38; Luke 9:62; Z. '95:47, 48.

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HOW ARE WE UNDER GOD'S PROTECTION?

Question.—How are we under divine care? How does the Lord's protection come to us, his followers?

Answer.—It is as new creatures and not as old creatures, according to the flesh, that we are reckoned members of the body of Christ, and under control and supervision of our head. It follows, then, that the interests of the new creature are those which will have the Lord's special care and protection—even though this be at the expense of his earthly, temporal, physical interests. The flesh is consecrated to death anyway, and our desire and the Lord's promise is that the faithful consummation of that earthly sacrifice shall work out the far more exceeding and abundant honor and blessing to the new creature. In a word, then, the Lord's special care toward us is in respect to our spiritual interests, as members of the Royal Priesthood.—Z. '05:223.

Behind a Frowning Providence

Exodus 1:1-14

Golden Text:—"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distress."—Psa. 107:13.

OUR present lesson treats of the virtual enslavement of the nation of Israel and their tribulations connected therewith. . . .

Whoever regards these experiences of Abraham's posterity as amongst the ordinary vicissitudes of life to which all mankind are subject, makes a mistake. To rightly understand the history of Israel we must remember that the divine purposes as represented in the Oath-Bound Covenant made with Abraham were behind and intermingled with all of Israel's experiences. And more than this, the natural seed of Abraham were to furnish a type, illustration, picture, of the experiences of Spiritual Israel on a higher plane. Looking first at the effect of the bondage and tribulation upon natural Israel we can readily surmise that they served to make that people of much stronger character than they otherwise would have been. To be a subject race would undoubtedly help to develop, in many at least, a humility of mind which was markedly illustrated in the person of Moses, who is declared to have been the meekest man in all the earth.

Furthermore, their tribulations would tend to bind them in sympathy more closely together as one nation, one people. Additionally their rigorous treatment as slaves would impress upon them more than ever their Abrahamic heritage in the promise of the Lord that they should be a great people and ultimately be used of him in the blessing of all the nations of the earth. This properly enough led them, as we read, to cry unto the Lord in their sore distress. Who can estimate the value of these lessons given to this nation at the very beginning of its existence—a nation from which the Lord designed to develop some of his chosen servants, amongst whom would be the Messiah himself and his chosen apostles, the foundation of the new dispensation, Spiritual Israel. Well has the poet said that behind a frowning providence God hides a smiling face. The Israelites had an experience of this kind: for a time divine favor was hidden from them, but the Lord was merely waiting for the appropriate time to be gracious to them, in a time and in a manner that would be most favorable to them and most in accord with his own arrangements for the blessing of themselves and all mankind.

The Psalmist in the Golden Text touched the vital point of Israel's experiences. Before being used of the Lord and prepared for further great things at his hand Israel needed to learn dependence upon him. And not only they but all of us have learned that trouble is a great teacher: that it appeals to the heart far more than does prosperity; that it points us to the Lord as the great caretaker. The Prophet has declared that before he was afflicted he went astray; and similarly Israel evidently would have been far more astray if deprived of the tribulations which led them to call on the Lord, and which brought to them his deliverance out of their distresses at the hands of Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant.

Lessons for Spiritual Israelites

Very similar are the lessons which the Spiritual Israelites are day by day receiving individually in the great school of experience. How often does the Lord allow Egypt, the world, to oppress those who are his. This oppression sometimes comes along financial lines and sometimes socially. It is sometimes severest in the home, at other times in the shop. The great oppressor typified by Pharaoh is Satan. He is the great taskmaster. To what an extent he has gained a power over the flesh of those who are trusting in the Lord alone for deliverance! And who will doubt that the great Adversary's special attacks are not upon the world and the wicked, but upon those who are the Lord's peculiar people, upon those who are his jewels, who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, and whose deliverance at the hands of the antitypical Moses, Christ, he has promised. Hearken to the Master's words, which assure us that in all of our tribulations we may reckon on his sympathy and loving interest and his power to make all things work together for our good. Let us give attention, too, to the prayer he taught us, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." And again the Apostle's assurance that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with every temptation will provide a way of escape.

As the effect of Israel's tribulation was to turn their hearts toward the Lord and to lead them to cry out for his promised assistance, so all of our trying experiences with the world, the flesh and the Adversary and the bondage of sin and death—all these appeal to the New Creatures in Christ who have the Father's promise. All this leads us more and more to look unto the Lord from whom cometh our help, and to wait for his Son from heaven, and to expect the deliverance of the groaning creation at his second advent. Is it not true, then, that present distresses and tribulations are all working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, if we are rightly exercised thereby? And if as true Israelites we have confidence in the Abrahamic promise, we have it, as the Apostle describes, as an anchor to our souls both sure and steadfast, entering into that which is beyond the veil, whither our forerunner is entered for us—and made atonement for us—and from whence he provides us the blessed deliverance which we hope soon to experience in the resurrection change, when in a moment, the twinkling of an eye, we shall be made like him, see him as he is and share his glory.—Z. '07:126, 127.

◆

The only pleasures which the new creature can truly enjoy, are those in which our Lord can be our companion, those which we can discuss with him and in which we can enjoy his fellowship. —Z. '98:40.

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The most absolute slavery is slavery of the **will** to another. Ours is such a slavery, but it is one that is beneficial. Whether we eat or drink or sleep or work—whatever we do—it is all to be done in harmony with the **Lord's will** and for His glory. Yes, ours is a most blessed slavery, and we would not become free from it for any consideration.—Z. '13: 356.

◆

"My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors." How much trouble there will be in our passing into the secret "chambers," in passing unto the Lord, we do not know. Yet when this trouble comes, there will be such a blessing from the Lord that those who go through it will be able to rejoice in tribulation. Whatever their experiences will be, these will be joyful in that they will have the thought of being forever with the Lord. We can rejoice even as did St. Stephen.—Z. '13:180.

◆

If it is our privilege to have some share in the fiery trials at the inauguration of the new dispensation, let us rejoice in whatever will bring us nearer to our Lord, in whatever will bring us closer into harmony with him and his service, purifying our hearts and arousing our faith and making us all that would be acceptable and pleasing in the sight of the Lord.—Z. '05: 379.

◆

Jonathan's friendship, love, was not of the effervescent kind. It was the genuine article. He did not love merely in word, but in deed and in truth—not merely when his father favored his friend and when the public acclaimed him and when he would thus have favor with others: but he loved him just the same when the king became the enemy of his friend and sought his life. Indeed, it may be said that no friendship could be surely counted upon until after it has been tried. The friendship which will not endure trial, testing, the friendship which will make no sacrifices is not the kind to be modeled after.

Jonathan had love of the kind the Lord admonishes His followers to have—the love which in honor prefers one another. While other loves have been great, this one doubtless stands pre-eminent above earthly love, especially because it was founded on a religious basis. It was because David loved the Lord, and sought to be guided by His will as that will was manifest at that time, that he would wait—that he conducted himself with wisdom, as the record declares. And it was because Jonathan discerned this spirit of wisdom, because he realized David was guided by the spirit of righteousness, that he loved David.—Z. '15:107.

◆

How important, that we should be honest-hearted to begin with, sincere in all our words and thoughts and conduct; and while this honesty of word and deed should guide all of our relationships with the world, we should be doubly careful to have them measure our relationship to the Lord and to his people and to his word! Only the sincere will ever be truly overcomers.—Z. '05:142.

◆

The privilege of the light of knowledge (of Truth) is God's reward for purity of heart.—Z. '11: 365.

◆

We hold that if **sincere love for Truth**—honesty of thought and deed—be yielded, sacrificed to pride, ambition, vain-glory, or any other thing, the result will be the loss of Present Truth.—Z. '06: 277.

◆

Let us encourage one another to strive for high ideals, and not to be discouraged by our unintentional failures.—Z. '15: 62.

◆

We do earnestly urge the importance of decision, and a positive decision, as being essential to proper peace of mind and to proper Christian progress.—Z. '15: 24.

◆

Service brings us certain joys which we could not otherwise have. It brings us certain experiences **necessary** to our own development and qualification for higher services beyond the veil.—Z. '14:126.

◆

"Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle—face it; 'tis God's gift.

"Be strong!
It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong;
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not—fight on! Tomorrow comes the song."
—Z. '09:108.

◆

ONENESS is quite unusual, and is generally secured in conventions held by others by having manuscripts of what the speakers will say examined by a committee beforehand. But we need no such restriction, because more and more, as the Lord intimated it would be, we find, "Thy watchman shall see eye to eye." (Isa. 52: 8.) Nor should we fail to remember the word: "They shall be all taught of God." (John 6: 45.) The fact that the Great Teacher is present superintending the work is, we believe, a further assurance along this line. We comfort ourselves with the thought that his eye, his rod and his staff are guiding his sheep from grace to grace and from knowledge to knowledge. Hence it is not astonishing that we find, as was predicted, that "the path of the just is as a shining light—shining more and more unto the perfect day." Little details may, indeed should be, expected to grow clearer day by day, but all the fundamentals of our faith super-structure are unchangeable.—Z. '06: 293.

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J. D. Malcan

Old Corn Gems

No. 98

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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Only the Humble Shall Be Exalted

Mark 10: 35-45.

Golden Text: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

THE Lord had crossed over Jordan in answer to the request of Mary and Martha that he should come and heal their brother Lazarus, who was sick. Jesus arrived intentionally too late for this, but awakened Lazarus from sleep, and thereby aroused a great storm of opposition, especially amongst the scribes and Pharisees, who sought to put him to death. Knowing that his time was not yet come, he retired into a mountain of northern Judea, but at the time of this lesson he with his twelve apostles was **en route** for Jerusalem. He had just explained to them more particularly the ignominy, shame and death which he would experience, and repeated his assurance of his resurrection. The rich young ruler had just visited him, and gone away sorrowful upon learning the terms of discipleship. Jesus had just said, How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the Kingdom; the apostles had inquired what they should have since they had left all, and Jesus assured them that they should have a hundred fold more in this present time, with persecution, and in the world to come everlasting life.

The context says that Jesus was walking in advance of the twelve, who were discussing matters amongst themselves, overawed by the stupendous things which the Lord had declared to be imminent. The courage of our Lord in the narrow way fills us with admiration. What a strong character was his! He had no thought of turning back; he was intent upon accomplishing his Father's will—upon sacrificing himself in the interest of others. A noble pattern the apostles saw before them—greatness in humility, victory through service.

A Goodly Heritage Desired

It was at this time that James and John approached the Lord in a private manner. Matthew tells us that their mother Salome was with them and really made the request for them in their names. Salome is supposed to have been the sister of Mary, the aunt of Jesus, in which event James and John were his full cousins. Realizing that matters were drawing to a crisis they sought of the Lord an assurance that they two might be very close to him in the Kingdom, one on his right hand and one on his left, the two positions of chiefest favor.

Our Lord did not reprove them, for doubtless he read in their hearts a great love and loyalty toward himself; and the desire for the positions indicated not merely the desire for the honors and authority implied, but specially because this would bring them closer to himself. Had the Lord seen in their hearts an evil form of ambition, undoubtedly he would have reproved it on the spot. His answer, however, was so framed as to impress these brothers and all of his followers since, with what is implied in joint-heirship with the Lord in the Kingdom. Very forceful is the expression, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The cup signifies experiences—as, for instance, when our Lord said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11.) Our Lord wished his disciples to see clearly that the Father had poured for him a special cup of experiences, and had required of him special baptism into death, as conditions precedent to his glory and Kingdom; and that whoever would become his associates in the Kingdom must become also his associates in the sufferings of this present time—in the ignominy and whatever experiences the Father might see best to permit as tests of faith and devotion and character. Our Lord did not refer to the Memorial Supper cup, but to the experiences which it symbolized, even as he did not refer to water baptism, but to the baptism into death which is symbolized by the water immersion.

How heart-searching was this question! It meant, Are ye willing? because it would be impossible for the disciples to have known their own ability except in the sense of having confidence in God that he would give the ability to those who had their wills thoroughly subjected to his. This is illustrated in the symbolical baptism, in which one no more buries himself than he raises himself. We merely surrender our wills, our all, to the Lord, and he by his Word and grace works in us to will and ultimately to do his good pleasure—expecting from us only the possibilities, and assisting us to these with grace sufficient for us, for every time of need.

"My Grace Is Sufficient for You"

That these two noble apostles were not inspired by selfish ambitions in this request is evidenced by their prompt reply to the Lord's searching question and later on evidenced by their faithfulness even unto death. They said, "We are able"—that is, "We are willing. God helping us, we will sacrifice everything to follow in your footsteps; we will count nothing dear unto us; we will lay aside every weight and every sinful besetment; we will run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." This we may assume to be a larger statement of their devotion.

Our Lord's love and sympathy went out to them afresh as he answered them, guaranteeing that with such willingness of heart they should indeed have the experiences necessary to fit them for a place in the Kingdom. What a comfort this is to even the weakest of the Lord's followers who are sincere.

The Lord looketh at the heart, and if he sees there full devotion to himself, he is pleased to grant to such his blessing, his aid, saying, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee—my strength is made perfect in weakness." We, too, are desirous of sharing the Kingdom with our Lord, yet not from love of exaltation above others, but from a desire to have this evidence that we please our Father and our Lord Jesus—to have this closeness of relationship to him, and to have the privilege of participation with our dear Redeemer in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth in due time. It is well that we should have the Lord's answer clearly before our minds, and know that unless we partake of his cup and are immersed into his death, we can have no share in his Kingdom of glory. Let us then count all things else as loss and as dross to obtain this necessary experience. As it comes to us let us not be fearful, nor think strange of the fiery trials that shall try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. On the contrary, even hereunto were we called, that we might now suffer with the Lord and by and by be glorified together with him.

As for the particular place to be occupied in the Kingdom by the sons of Zebedee or by us, our Lord pointed out that the assigning of such positions was in the Father's hands—the choicest positions shall be given to those for whom they have been prepared by the Father. Not that we are to understand that the Father prepared the places in advance by any arbitrary divisions, but rather that the Father's prearranged plan is that each of the followers of Jesus shall have positions of honor in the Kingdom proportionate to the zeal of their faithfulness in the present time—for none shall have any part in the Kingdom who do not now prove faithful.

The Meekest and Most Zealous

It is not for us to decide the zeal and faithfulness of the apostles—to say which two would better fill these positions of chiefest honor. The Father will make no mistake. It will not surprise us, however, should we find the Apostle Paul in one of these two positions. His faithful, loving zeal and loyalty seem to shine out conspicuously even amongst those who were also faithful and loyal. It is not for us to have any ambitious feelings respecting this matter, except that we desire always to serve the Lord and be pleasing to him, and eventually to be as close to him as possible. When we remember that the closer we come to him in the present trials and experiences and sufferings with faithfulness the closer we will be to him in the future, it explains to us the meaning of the Apostle's words when speaking of his severe trials: he called them light afflictions but for a moment, working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 Cor. 4:17.

We recall that there had been, a little while before, some rivalry amongst the apostles as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom. At that time Jesus took a little child as an exemplification of candor and guilelessness, and assured them that unless they became as little children—simple-hearted, honest, candid, they could in no wise have any part in his Kingdom. Now, when the ten other disciples learned the special mission of Salome and the request made by and for James and John, they were indignant at them. Possibly some of them, Judas included, were very anxious for the authority and power and dignity of the throne, but without the very special love and longing to be near the Master himself which seem to have influenced James and John in their request. But Jesus set matters straight with them all, and turned their displeasure into an opportunity for another good lesson, by the assurance that the chief positions in the Kingdom would be given along the lines of meritorious service, and that thus each one of them would have his opportunity to strive for the chief position by striving to render service to the others.

Amongst the Gentiles the rulers are lords, who do no serving but are served, but among the followers of Jesus the rule is to be reversed; he who would serve most was to be esteemed most highly. What a beauty there is in the divine order of things! how thoroughly all who are right minded can sympathize with the principles here laid down! How reasonable they are and how contrary to the spirit of the world. Truly, the Lord's followers will in this sense of the word be a peculiar people in their zeal for good works—for serving one another and for doing good unto all men as they have opportunity. The Apostle Peter emphasizes this point (1 Pet. 5:6). "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased."—Luke 14:11.

Our Lord Servant of All

The Lord did not have one standard for his followers and another standard for himself. Consequently, when they heard him say, Whosoever of you will be chief shall be servant of all, they could promptly recognize that this was the course that he had pursued—that he had been servant to them all; and it was on account of the services that he was continually rendering them that they delighted to serve him, to acknowledge him their Master and to walk in his steps. Indeed they had seen only a small fragment of the Lord's sacrificing and of its far-reaching influence as a service to others. We can see this as we recognize the fact that our Lord was about to die, not merely for his disciples, not merely for the Jews, but to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that the whole world eventually might have a blessing—a blessed opportunity for coming to life eternal through the merit of his service. Our Lord called this to their attention, saying, "For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [served] but to minister [serve], and to give his life a ransom for many." This is one of the very explicit statements of Scripture respecting the object of our Lord's death—that it was not for his own sins that he died, that on the contrary it was for ours, and that in thus dying he gave himself a ransom price—a corresponding price for the sins of the whole world.

No other lesson requires to be so carefully learned by the Lord's people as this lesson of humility. It has to do with the very humblest of the flock, as well as with those who are teachers and elders, etc.; but the degree of force that seems to come with the besetment or temptation seems to multiply in proportion to the position and attainments of the individual. Pride and ambition may be in those who have no official position in the Church, often asserted in fault-finding and criticism which, to the hearers, is intended to imply superior wisdom or ability on the part of the critic —that his wisdom and ability only wait for opportunity to manifest his greatness above his fellows. We are not objecting to a kindly brotherly word of criticism given privately and with a view to helpfulness, but merely to the kind which vaunteth itself and seeks to do injury to the reputation of another occupying a preferred position.

"Be Not Many of You Teachers"

As the Apostle intimates, however, this besetment bears chiefly upon those who have some talent, some ability, and whom their fellows have to some extent honored as teachers. Little men, like little ships with broad sails, are in great danger of being capsized if too strong a wind of popularity play upon them. Not only so, but we believe that even the most humble, the most faithful, the most zealous to be servants of the cause, have continual need to be on their guard lest their good intentions should be used of the Adversary as a trap for their ensnarement. Let us remember the Apostle's words, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man [who is a teacher] shall receive greater condemnation"—he is exposed to greater trials and temptations as a result. This must not hinder any who have talents from using them, but it should make each one very careful that he does not think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly. If the judgment of the majority of the congregation does not recognize his adaptation to the service of a teacher, he should humbly accept its conclusion as correct, no matter how highly he had thought of himself previously. And even if the majority should conclude that he is worthy of a position as a teacher in Zion, he should tread very softly before the Lord, very humbly, realizing that those who in any degree attempt to impart instruction in spiritual things to others are to that extent acting as representatives and mouthpieces of the Lord himself, the Head of the body; and all should keep in mind the Lord's words in this Golden Text and his own exemplification of the matter—that he who serves most and not he who lords it most should have the chief respect of the Lord's people.—Z. '04: 138-141.

Different Phases of the Word Temptation

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust [desire], and enticed."—James 1:13, 14.

MANY people—and particularly those of oriental countries—have within them a fatalistic tendency; as, for instance, the Mohammedans would be inclined to say respecting any calamity that came upon them, "It is of God," and simply to submit themselves and make no further effort. These people would be inclined to have a similar attitude in respect to sin, and to say, "It is God's will that I should do wrong; and I am not, therefore, blameworthy. If His will is that I should sin, I will sin. If His will is that I should bear the marks of sin, I will bear the marks of sin." This is a grave error. God tempts no man to sin.

It is, of course, quite proper that we should recognize God's hand in His dealings with us and should be very submissive. But the Apostle points out that temptations are not of God, but of one's self. Many Christians are inclined to take the opposite standpoint to that of the Orientals and say, "There are no temptations from God; hence all our temptations are from the Adversary."

But the Apostle James points out that our temptations are the result of our own natural desires and weaknesses. These are stimulated from without—often from our companions and associates in life. All about us there are examples and influences toward evil, in various forms—enticements. These might be charged back primarily to Satan; for all sin entered into the world by him. Satan had to do with the beguilement of our first parents, and so had to do with the introduction of sin. And Satan and his demon hosts now operate, as far as possible, in conjunction with our weaknesses. But this does not clear us of personal responsibility; for none of these have power to coerce our wills. Our responsibility may vary according to the natural strength or weakness of our character. Therefore we are to "judge nothing before the time." It is a matter that God alone can fully judge—as to how much one can overcome.

God's people are to realize, then, that no temptation is of God; and, resisting temptation, they will be on God's side. They are to be overcomers of temptation, resisters of temptation, whether from within, or from the Adversary, or from the weaknesses of others, which might lead them into sin, into things contrary to God's will.

The Apostle says that God tempteth no man. If we should think of God as tempting us to sin, it would be a horrible thought; for by reason of His power, none could resist what He brought to bear upon us, and we would surely be overcome. But when we know that our temptations are **not** from God, we know that He will help us and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; but that He will, with every temptation, provide a way of escape. He will protect us according to His promise, as we need protection and assistance. With this thought in our minds, we can be strong.

How God Tempted Abraham

When we look back to the Old Testament, we read that "God did tempt Abraham," saying, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest. . . . and offer him for a burnt offering." The question arises, How shall we reconcile this statement, "God did tempt Abraham," with the statement of the Apostle that God "tempteth no man"? The reply is that St. James in our text is limiting the word temptation to temptations to evil. God tempts us to **do good.** He sets before us the "exceeding great and precious promises," the wonderful promises He has made to us. They act as magnets drawing us, as we might say. In this sense of the word we are tempted of God. But God does not tempt us to do evil, to commit sin. God tempted Abraham, tested him, not with a view to do him harm, but with a view to doing him good; and because Abraham stood the test, God could accord to him the greater blessings. And He did so! He gave him great blessings in this life, as well as a promise of greater blessings to be his in the life to come, in the resurrection.

The test for Abraham was that he should offer in sacrifice his son Isaac, in whom centered all the promises. By his prompt obedience Abraham gave proof of his loyalty. He accounted that God was able even to raise his son from the dead, that the promises might be fulfilled. (Hebrews 11:18, 19.) When his loyalty had thus been tested to the limit, when the knife was raised to slay his son, the Lord through the angel stayed his hand and provided him with a ram for a sacrifice.

Why God Cannot Be Tempted to Evil

The further statement of our text is that God cannot Himself be tempted with evil. We inquire how this is. We remember that our Lord Jesus was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"; but that He "was in all points tempted like as we [His disciples] are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 7:26; 4:15.) If Jesus was thus holy, and fully in accord with the Father, and the Father cannot be tempted, how could Jesus be tempted? We answer, Our Lord was perfect in the flesh, perfect as a human being. But humanity has its limitations of knowledge and of endurance. The human brain and the human body are not adapted to know everything or to bear everything. This is one reason why God does not tell us everything. We must walk by faith. The man who is begotten of the Holy Spirit, and who is able to understand many of the deep things of God, cannot appreciate **all** of the eternal things; for they are beyond his grasp.

We might take, for illustration, a dog, a very wise dog, capable of carrying out our directions to a considerable extent. Yet if we should try to talk to the dog about trigonometry, or higher mathematics in any form, or about astronomy, he would be—we could not say **bewildered,** but—unable to understand **at all.** And so between humanity and God there is a wide gulf. It is not possible for humanity to grasp all the parts, all the details, of the Divine Plan. Even with the begettal of the Holy Spirit we see things "through a glass darkly," and not face to face, the Apostle tells us. We shall, when perfected on the Divine plane, behold things fully, completely; we shall see from God's standpoint.

Our Lord's Temptation

So our Lord Jesus, naturally perfect as a man, at baptism was begotten of the Holy Spirit and became a New Creature; but that New Creature lived in and operated through the human body; and as long as He was in the flesh, Jesus was subject to limitations. He was also surrounded by imperfect beings, their desires, their views, their imperfections. In order to sacrifice the earthly interests, then, He would need much faith. Therefore, He had severe trials of obedience to God, of faith in God. He was not tempted because of sin or weakness; for he had neither sin nor weakness. He was not tempted in the same respects as a natural man would be; for He was not like a natural man—He was spirit-begotten. He was tempted in respect to His obedience to God, in respect to trust in the Father's providential care. And we are tempted in like manner, for our development, that we may faithfully lay down our lives, may gladly give up the things that are seen, that we may attain to the things not seen.

In respect to strength and knowledge, our Lord as a man was evidently different from the Father. The Father could always know at once the good from the evil, and is not weak in any sense of the word—to be tempted by anything—is strong to carry out His own will, having no inclination whatever to sin, but a repugnance to it. Infinite strength dwells in God. Because our Lord Jesus assumed the same attitude toward sin, we read of Him: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." (Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:9.) All of the brethren of the Lord Jesus must take the same stand everywhere regarding sin, and especially sin in ourselves, and the tendency toward sin in us. A continual battle is going on in the Lord's disciples as they endeavor to follow His example.

So then, God tempts no man, neither is He tempted of any, to sin. He cannot be tempted of evil. Evil can have no influence with Him. Our Lord Jesus is now in that condition where He cannot be tempted. He is of the Divine nature, and perfect in power. And so when we shall have reached this same condition by the resurrection "change," we shall likewise not be subject to evil or temptation. We shall have perfect power, and shall be in full accord with that which is right, that which is of God.—Z. '15:171, 172.

"The Word Was Made Flesh"

OUR FINITE MINDS have difficulty in understanding some of the deep things of Scripture because of our insufficiency of knowledge and of experience. All that we know of our Lord's pre-human existence is revealed in the Word of God. The Scriptures state that our Lord was rich and **became** poor; not that He **remained rich** and **seemed** to become poor, but that He actually became poor that we might become rich. The Apostle says that He divested Himself of those conditions that He had before He became human, and that He took a bondman's form. He was made flesh. The explanation is given. "A body hast Thou prepared Me," a human body, and thus He was made "a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death."—Heb. 10:5; 2:9.

Putting together the Scriptural statements on the subject we have this: In His pre-human existence our Lord was the **Logos**, "the beginning of the creation of God," the Alpha of all God's creation, and the Omega in that Jehovah created only this One. Of the **Logos** it is written, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3.) He was on the spirit plane, next to the Father.

In the Divine Plan of the Ages, formulated long before, a proposition was made our Lord with a view to the redemption of mankind; provision was made that if obedient to the Father's will, the **Logos** would receive still further exaltation, even to the divine nature. For this joy set before Him, our Lord took the various steps necessary to complete the great work of redemption. The contract into which He entered with the Father was one which involved much humiliation. While there was a sacrifice of power, of honor, of glory, yet no sacrifice of life was involved in the first step taken; namely, His acceptance of the Father's arrangement that He should be made flesh; that He should become a human being, that He should give up His existence on the heavenly plane.

Originally, as the **Logos**, our Lord was a soul on the spirit plane, in the sense that any intelligent being is a soul; for the word "soul" signifies being; and the transfer of the life principle to a human body brought Him to the earthly plane. The life principle was the same that He had before, therefore the personality was the same. It was important to have identity of mind; and this He had by Divine arrangement.

7

A Body Given for the Purpose of Death

The Scriptures do not explain how the spark of life belonging to the spirit being known as the **Logos** became transferred to the human plane. When our Lord was thus changed, He merely took the step of getting ready to become the sacrifice for sinners. In His pre-existent state He could not have given the corresponding price for Adam; for He had not the human life to offer. But when He became a human being and had reached the age of maturity, He was in condition to be the Sin-offering.

We would say that our Lord as a human being was the **same** soul as in His pre-existent condition; for He had the same life principle as before; and that when He became human He did not die as a spirit being. The Scriptures declare that our Lord was "made flesh," a human being; and that the difference between Him and mankind in general was that He was perfect—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"—separate from the remainder of the human race. (Heb. 7:26.) The Scriptures also explain that this difference resulted from the fact that He was specially begotten. The life principle by which He was conceived came directly from the Heavenly Father.

This explanation is altogether different from the theory known as Incarnation. The thought of the theory of incarnation is that a spirit being took possession of an earthly being—became incarnate, dwelt in the flesh, in the same way that some are possessed of evil spirits which dwell within them. This, we believe, is a wrong thought respecting our Lord which has come down from the "Dark Ages." There is nothing in the Scriptures about **incarnation**. The Scriptures do not say that our Lord's **body** died, while the **spirit being** within it remained alive. But the Bible says that our Lord left the glory which He had with the Father and was found in fashion as a man; that He humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross; that He was "put to death in the flesh."—John 17:4, 5; 1 Pet. 3:18; Phil. 2:8.

"Made Flesh and Dwelt Among Us"

From what we know of childhood we recognize it as the period of development. And so we read of our Lord: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:40, 52.) His was not a mind that had all the experiences and intelligence of His pre-existent state. We read that He **grew** in wisdom. His **mind** grew. Of course, being perfect He would learn much more rapidly and accurately than would others; and this accounts for the fact that as a child He was able to confound the Doctors of the Law. With His natural qualities of mind He was able to grasp the situation, to take in things rapidly.

St. Luke tells us that at the age of twelve years our Lord accompanied His mother and Joseph to Jerusalem. The Jewish children were accustomed to attending religious services; and it was a custom that Jewish boys should make a consecration at the age at which Jesus did. Jesus knew that He was different from other boys. Very likely He told them the facts relating to His miraculous birth. It is assumed by some that He was even charged with having an illegitimate birth. But since we do not know definitely about this, we must confine ourselves to the Scriptures.

Our Lord came into the world in a miraculous manner for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecies, which were all to attain fulfilment in Him. Naturally He would avail Himself of the first opportunity of ascertaining the requirements. When at twelve years of age He learned from the Doctors of the Law that He could not assume the priestly function as a boy, He made no further attempt, but was subject to His parents, or to Mary and her husband, who properly enough were His guardians until He reached thirty years of age, when His first step was to make **full** consecration of Himself.

"I Come To Do Thy Will"

Our Lord at thirty years of age certainly had much knowledge that Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Our Lord had some knowledge of what constitutes sin and its penalty. He had also knowledge of the fact that God had arranged for the redemption of mankind, through the great Mediator of the New Covenant—a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew that the **inability of others** to keep the divine law written in the Decalogue and **His ability** to keep that Law, constituted the difference between Himself and others.

Doubtless our Lord's mother had told Him of His miraculous birth and of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecy of Anna and of Simeon. And He had in mind the prophecy respecting Himself and the future of the great Messiah that was to come and deliver the world. All this knowledge was very valuable.

But the thing that our Lord evidently lacked was the knowledge of the deeper things of the Scriptures. He evidently found perplexities in the Bible; for He had not received the Holy Spirit. Although He might be better qualified to understand these things than were the fallen race, yet, as the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14.) Jesus had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit; therefore He did not have the understanding of the prophecies and symbols.

"The Heavens Were Opened"

All this knowledge began to come upon Him when He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. He began to understand the higher things, the deep things of God. He had understood in a measure about the Lamb that was slain as the sin-offering and the things about the putting away of sin, but nothing to identify the One who was to be the great Deliverer or to explain the wonderful pictures in the Scriptures. Just as soon as He was begotten of the Holy Spirit He began to see that if He would reign, it would be by a manifestation of loyalty to God and to righteousness. As soon as He was illuminated He saw the things pertaining to the suffering.

During our Lord's earthly ministry He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8.) And thus He received the great illumination which was so powerful an addition to Him —just as it is a great illumination to us to see the terms and conditions of our calling—that we must walk in the steps of our Lord if we would reign with Him.

Just in what manner the higher things were revealed to our Lord we may not know. St. Paul tells us of wonderful revelations which were made to him. Doubtless our Lord also had revelations, but just what was revealed to Him thus, in order that He might understand His pre-human conditions, etc., we may not know. Nor do we know how all the acts and experiences during the previous period of His existence before He became flesh could have been impressed suddenly upon His mind. The same God who is able to give us a spirit body which will assimilate all the experiences of the present life, could also impress upon Jesus all the previous experiences which He had had.

The impress of previous experiences did not come to Him during His boyhood; for He was then growing in knowledge and in stature, and in favor with God and man. We believe that the impress came at the time of His consecration at Jordan; and that not only had He there given to Him the impress of His previous experiences with the Father and of the remote past, but also that He had light given to Him upon the Scriptures so that He could grasp the full purport of what He had done when He gave Himself in consecration.

As the "heavens" continued to open to our Lord, He would see that the experiences of the Messiah, which could not have been commanded under the Law Covenant, were nevertheless to be His privileges as He would see these to be the Divine will, as He would see these to be the Divine Law in the Prophecies. As a sheep would be dumb before its shearers, so He would not rebel as His rights were taken from Him. He would know that He was to be put to death; and that He was to be an innocent victim. He was to be the crucified One, the antitype of the brazen serpent.

Having consecrated to fulfil all things written in the Book Jesus was fully prepared for His every experience. This we see also is the purport of that beautiful picture in Revelation of the scroll sealed with seven seals. The proclamation was made, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Rev. 5:2.) Up to that time no one had been found who could open the Book. But at that time our Lord was found worthy to open the Book, and to Him was given all the knowledge in the Divine Plan, that He might carry out these things in the sacrificing of the flesh.

At His consecration at Jordan our Lord gave up the human life—He gave up all rights and privileges as a human being. The ultimate purpose of this full surrender of His life was that He might bring everlasting life to mankind. The Father's arrangement with Him, however, was such that He might retain His personality, His identity. But after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, He was a New Creature; and as a New Creature He had the human body in which to develop character, in which to have His experiences. This New Creature was developed to perfection during the three and one-half years of His ministry, and was ready for the spirit body which had been promised to Him.

If our Lord had not been found perfect, faithful, loyal, in His pre-human condition, He never would have had this privilege of becoming a man and the Redeemer of men. Because of His obedience as a man He received the greater glory, immortality. He was perfect under all the favorable conditions before He became a man; He was faithful as a man, and being glorified, He is still faithful. Therefore He maintains the same relationship to God and to righteousness that He ever had. Consequently He would not specially need any of those things which assist in making character; for He has never shown any defects to be rectified. But we may suppose that the experiences which He had in His pre-existent state, and while He was a man, and since He was glorified, all co-operate to make His character intelligent and loyal in the very highest sense.

He "Manifested Forth His Glory"

Let us examine some Scriptures which might be understood to imply that our Lord had a clear recollection of His pre-human experiences with the Father.

(1) "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19.) These words were used in connection with the healing of the sick.

They do not, of course, mean that the Lord had seen the Father healing the sick, but that He had seen the Father's will, the Father's Plan.

Our Lord was simply carrying out the Father's will concerning Him: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart"; etc. (Isa. 35:5, 6.) These miracles of healing were some of the things that He was to do, as written in the Scriptures. He knew that He was to do these miracles and that they were a foreshadowing of the things to be done by and by. As we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus . . . and manifested forth His glory."—John 2:11.

(2) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." (Prov. 8:23-25.) This passage may be viewed either as a prophecy of what our Lord understood of His previous condition, or as a figure of speech setting forth the Wisdom of God all through the ages. But since the Wisdom of God is specially revealed in our Lord Jesus, so this was a foreshadowing of what Jesus might know respecting His pre-human condition.

(3) When our Lord at twelve years of age asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49.) He would have in mind the Heavenly Father, just as any consecrated child of God might think of Him. From the information which He had received from His mother, Mary, He would know of His miraculous birth and of His special mission in the world. His mother knew that He could not be true to Himself and His mission unless she told Him about these things. Having been told that He was specially holy and miraculously born for this very purpose, He now turned to Mary and asked, Is it possible that you should not know that I should be about My Father's business? Did not you tell me of this thing? He was surprised that Mary and Joseph should not understand that this was the very thing for Him to do.

Memory the Means of Identification

(4) Our Lord's statement, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), serves to identify the man Jesus with His previous condition as the **Logos** before He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He is the same today, although He has been received to the spirit plane. He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore." (Rev. 1:18.) Originally He was on the spirit plane. Later as a man, He lived; He died. At His resurrection He was made alive on the spirit plane, far above angels, principalities and powers. But the identity, the personality, is the same.

And we can readily believe that the memory of things past is still with our Lord. We also think that He remembers the experiences which He had in the flesh and also those which He had before He became flesh. Otherwise, He could not identify Himself. Memory seems to be the means of identification of our personality. Nothing in this Scripture would seem to imply that our Lord was born into the world with the knowledge of all His previous experiences. After His consecration He received the knowledge by some means which we are not great enough to understand—by some power the Father used; for the Father has all power.

(5) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) This statement would not identify our Lord with His previous condition; for in His pre-existent state, He was not **Jesus.** He was called Jesus at His birth. He became Jesus Christ at His baptism. "By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11.) Our Lord began to bear the iniquities of the world at His consecration, and finished so doing at His crucifixion. Since then He has been reckoning certain persons to be members of Himself. When the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the heavens were opened unto Him, He probably received the knowledge which would enable Him to overcome.

Before His consecration, when our Lord was a perfect man just as Adam was, we know not what force Satan's temptations would have had; but when His mind was opened, then Satan came to tempt Him along the very line of His work, along the line of the consecration which He had already made. Satan attempted to overthrow His consecration and to thwart its completion. How much knowledge our Lord had we do not know; but the Heavenly Father gave Him sufficient to enable Him to come off conqueror. And so with us. Our Lord gives us knowledge of Himself and of the Father. He shows us the relation between the sufferings of this present time and the glories that are to follow. Thus by knowledge all the members of the Body of this Great Righteous Servant will be permitted to come off "more than conquerors" by His grace.

The Natural Man Cannot Perceive Spiritual Things

(6) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (John 3:11.) The intimation is that our Lord could tell heavenly things, but that He was not disposed to do so, because Nicodemus and others found it difficult to receive even the earthly things. How could Jesus tell of the heavenly things? By that time He may have had the impress of memory in respect to His pre-existent condition.

We are to tell the heavenly things, but not to the natural man. "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6.) Our Lord said that He had many things to tell His disciples, but that they could not receive them until the Holy Spirit came. (John 16:12, 13.) And, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:14, 10.) Now if the Holy Spirit reveals some of the deep things to **us,** how much **more** could the perfect mind of our Lord enter into the holy things?

"The Glory Which I Had With Thee"

(7) Our Lord's words, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was" (John 17:5), would not signify that He had no knowledge of His prospective share in the divine nature. He had the assurance of the Scriptures, one of which was that He should be very high; another that the Lord would give unto Him the Kingdom; another says that Jehovah God would "divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12); still another says, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4:) He was to be both a Priest and a King of very high state and honor.

Probably our Lord knew these things fully after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, even as St. Paul was caught away to the third heaven and received knowledge of wonderful things "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12:4.) And so it is most probable that our Lord Jesus had some special revelation; for we read that He said that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26); thus indicating His knowledge of the fact that both He and the Church would share in the divine nature and inherency of life.

Our Lord's words show that He was not wishing to aspire to these glorious things. Very humbly He said, "Father, I have come to do Thy will. Father, I shall perform the work Thou hast given Me to do and I shall be glad to be returned to the glory I had with Thee—to ask nothing as a favor. I am glad that I have had this privilege, and I think that I shall not suffer by reason of My obedience to Thy will. I shall be glad, therefore, to be with Thee in the glory that I shared with Thee before the world was."

He did not say to the Father, "Do not forget to pay Me; do not forget what Thou didst promise." No. He did the Father's will without any thought of compensation connected with it. So with us. Anyone who looks for the divine nature merely as a reward and feels that it is due him, is taking an improper view. We should feel that to be on the side of righteousness and to be identified with our Lord Jesus is a great privilege, if there be no reward of the divine nature at all; but the thought of the reward is a great incentive to run patiently for something super-abundant, exceedingly beyond what we could have asked or thought.—Z. '12:228-231.

Training Our Affections Heavenward

2

"Set your affection on things Above, not on things on the earth."—Colossians 3:2.

IN THE natural make-up of humanity there is a certain tendency which we all recognize as a sort of mental sacrilege, although we are unable to philosophize upon it or to explain it. So surely as we are men and women we have certain impulses of affection, certain powers that go out toward other creatures, other things; and it is very important that we see where they are tending; otherwise they will lead to idolatry. Just as the little tendrils of a vine will take hold of whatever is within reach, so our affections go out to various earthly objects; and they need to be pruned and trained, just as a vine needs to be. When you desire to have your vine grow a certain way, you turn it in the proper direction, tie it if need be, and see that its tendrils take hold of the proper supports.

Various Worldly Objects of Affection

Thus it is with each of us. These affections are proper, they are good; but they need guiding, training. If we did not have these affections, we could not love God. We must have them in order to a proper balance of character. Without them we could not hold together. The need for their proper guidance is manifest when we see some lady setting her affections on a little dog, giving it much time, care, choice food, etc. Some of the wealthy set their affections on poodle dogs, bull dogs, bird dogs or Angora cats. Some make pets of Canary birds, rabbits, white mice, etc. They spend upon those pets much valuable time, thought and care that might be much better spent in other ways—often treating them as if they were children, and lavishing as much affection upon them as if they were human. Some do the same with flowers.

Although we believe in having a very kindly feeling toward dumb animals, and although we greatly admire flowers, yet we hold that as the Lord's people we should not treat any of these as if they were human beings, nor set our affections upon them to our injury and the neglect of much more important things. . . .

As we look out upon the world of mankind, we see that some are much better balanced than others. We sympathize with the world; for most of them do not know the Lord. They are not Christians. Very many of them have poor, meager lives with little to fill their hearts and to brighten and enlarge their mental horizon. Many who spend little or no time upon pets, set their affections and thoughts upon a home. It is a great pleasure to them to be able to say, "I have a good home of my own." This longing for home is a natural craving of our beings. Phrenologists call this natural trait, inhabitiveness—love of habitation. But we are not to permit our affections to center even here. As children of God we should have far higher aspirations than the world has.

Many set their hearts upon having a large bank account. We have known people whose minds are so unbalanced that they would do almost anything to secure a good bank account. And when this is gained, they still are not satisfied. They continue to grasp after more, often resorting to very questionable or very dishonest methods to gain their ends. Such people are mentally and morally deranged. But we are to remember that the human family in their fallen condition are all more or less deranged. Only a thorough and radical course of treatment can remove the difficulty. The Lord alone can cure the malady that affects the entire human race.

Legitimate Affections Liable to Perversion

There are still higher affections than those we have named which are also dangerous unless properly trained and guided. These are the affections of man for woman, woman for man, man for man, woman for woman, etc. All this is proper, of course, but we are to avoid inordinate affections, and are to have only that which is ordinary—that is, reasonable, proper. We are to beware of going to extremes. In His Word God has given us the proper outlines of conduct for His children; and we can know these only when we study His directions. Otherwise we are sure to take a wrong course. "Set not your affection on things on the earth."

It is God's arrangement that even husbands and wives should not set their affections too much upon each other. Thus the Apostle Paul enjoins, "The time is short: it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none." (1 Corinthians 7: 29.) The intimation seems to be that we should not reckon our earthly relationships as being the highest and best of all things. It is a great thing to have each other's support in the trials and difficulties of life. We are not wishing to say anything to weaken this blessed bond. But it should be held in accordance with knowledge of and in harmony with God's Word. It should not be permitted to be in any wise a hindrance to our running the Heavenly race successfully. It should not become an earth-born cloud to veil from us the Father's face and approval.

By natural tendency we would all be inclined to go wrong: therefore we need to give careful heed to the admonition to set our affection on things Above. Let each of us look around carefully and sweep before our own doors. We are not here simply to have a good time. We are here for the purpose of learning certain principles, certain lessons that the Lord would have us learn, so that we may more than ever shape our lives in harmony therewith, that we may be able to see all the things of life from God's viewpoint. God's Word does not go into every detail of life; but it lays down important principles that touch our lives at **every** point; and it is for us to learn more and more how to apply these principles, to see what we need to restrain, what we need to cultivate, etc. The Lord wishes us to be intelligent children.

"God First"

Those who come into harmony with the mind of the Lord have that wisdom from Above, which is first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits. (James 3:17.) Each of us should scrutinize the affairs of his own life and observe whether to any extent he is **setting** his affections upon earthly objects or things, even upon things which are in themselves right and proper. One cannot love his wife too much, unless he permits her to come into the Lord's place in his heart. If he should love her so much that he would please her rather than the Lord, then he is doing wrong. God must be first. Everything must be subordinate. Everything should be brought into line with this: **God first**—His will, His Plan, His ways.

As husbands and wives, kindred and friends, there is a certain degree of love that is in full harmony with the Heavenly love, the Father's will; and there are other affections or degrees of affection that are not in accordance therewith. Beware of these latter. Every one is imperfect, and each has tendencies whereby he might be led astray. Our great Adversary goeth about seeking whom he may devour. If he could, he would be glad to devour us. The better Christian one is, the better the Adversary would like to get hold of him.

To be a child of God does not mean that we shall be free from all earth-born tendencies. The Apostle points out that there is a continual fight of the New Creature against the old. (Galatians 5:17.) The Heavenly impulses, tendencies and aspirations need to be fought for; they must be carefully and continually cultivated. Not only must our affections be torn from their earthly props, to which they naturally cling, but they must be trained Heavenward, and be **held** there by the cords of love and devotion to God. **Do not let them gravitate again earthward.** There are many things on this earth that are attractive, that are beautiful; but we need not set our hearts upon them. We may see them and admire them; but we must go right along the narrow way. Our hearts are only just so large; and if we fill them with flowers or pets or earthly ambitions or affections, how can there be room for the infinitely more important and beautiful things?

Fruits, Not Chips, Should Fill Our Mental Baskets

We all remember the familiar story of the boy who was very fond of reading novels, and whose father wished to impress a valuable lesson upon his mind. One day he said to his son, "John, empty that basket of apples in the corner; then go and fill the basket with chips." The boy did so, and brought in the basket filled with chips. "Now," said the father, "put all the apples also into the basket." The surprised boy said, "Father, I cannot put the apples in while the chips are there." "No," said the father, "and your mind is just like that basket. It can hold only so much; and if you fill it with chips, there will be no room for other and better things."

This was a wise father; he gave his son a good suggestion. You and I, as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, should fill our minds with the glorious Heavenly things—the Heavenly hopes, the Heavenly ambitions, the Heavenly affections. All these earthly things are but as chips in comparison. The mind and the heart filled with chips cannot contain the fruits of the Spirit. If we fill our baskets with the Heavenly loves and joys, the spiritual treasures, we shall have that which is transcendently above any earthly love and joy.

Beware of earthly, spurious love; for it will be a hindrance of the Heavenly love. The two should not be confused and mixed. The unselfish natural love, which is an element of perfect human nature, will not, if kept in subservience to the Heavenly, interfere with our spiritual interests. The one does not infract or destroy the other. There should be a natural love for husband, wife, children, parents, and the Lord would have this continue: but He would have it in full subjection to the Heavenly things. Here, also, God should be first.

Setting Affections Above a Gradual Work

In our text the Apostle is addressing Christians, the class who are day by day training their affections Heavenward. This matter of **setting** the affections on Heavenly things, however, is something that must be repeated, persevered in: for the affections are inclined to slip off. We have nothing but our old brains with which to do our thinking, and these brains have tendencies toward the flesh. Therefore the necessity arises for a repeated and continual setting of the affections on the things Above, until they become securely fastened there, fixed, established. Heaven is to be our eternal Home, not the earth, not the fleshly condition. All the precious promises center Above. Christ our beloved King is there. We are being prepared to enter soon into Heaven itself, the condition beyond the veil. The glories of the Holiest of all are now ours by faith; and they will soon be ours in reality if we hold fast and continue faithful to our covenant with God.

The Lord has now through His promises given us a foretaste of the good things to come. We have "the earnest of the Spirit." It is like the paying down of a hundred dollars to secure the purchase of a house. The balance remains due, and the buyer does not get the property until this balance is paid. But the earnest money holds the place for him until the full payment is made. By giving us His Holy Spirit God binds the contract into which we have entered with Him. In giving us this advance payment the Lord says, "Now prove to Me how faithfully you will keep your part of the Covenant into which we have entered. You keep your part, and I will keep Mine." "Faithful is He that calleth us, who also will do it." The only question is whether we shall do our part faithfully; for God will surely do His part.

Careful Preparation of the Bridal Garments

When we ponder on earthly things we see that they are not worthy to be compared with the Heavenly things. But there is danger of spending consecrated time on things that are of less value even than flowers, etc. How much time do you think you should spend in reading the newspapers? How much does this enable you to set your affections on the things above? Each of us is responsible to the Lord for how he uses every moment of his time—God's time. We are not here condemning the reading of important world-news which bears upon the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. But we do not need to read much to find out what is necessary.

Doubtless if Jesus were here in the flesh now, He would be interested in noting how the world conditions are fulfilling the testimony of the Scriptures. He told us to watch for these fulfilments and to lift up our heads when we saw them coming to pass. But how can we lift up our heads if we do not see them coming to pass? And how can we see them if we do not read that which will give us this necessary information? But we are not to read for entertainment, nor are we to read what is unprofitable to us as New Creatures.

So, then, dear brethren and sisters, we see the course we are to pursue. We are to be the Bride of Jehovah's great Son. Therefore we must be very diligent to get everything in readiness for the approaching marriage. When we consider the preparations which an earthly bride makes for her nuptials, we have a good illustration of how important it is for us to have our garments all prepared, our robes spotless, our embroidery-work all completed beforehand. You and I are privileged to have a most important part in the greatest, grandest wedding ever held. Therefore we should be ready. We who were by nature children of wrath even as others, are now privileged to be cleansed from all defilement by the precious blood of Christ. Daily also we are to wash with the water of the Word. We are to be purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and be fitted to become the Bride of our Heavenly King.

This preparation means a continuous work as long as we sojourn in the mortal body. God's great Programme has been so arranged as to demonstrate who will be fit to constitute the Bride of His Son. This decision in our case will depend on our diligence in making ourselves ready. If we attend to this most important work properly, we shall have no time to fritter away. We shall have little time for anything else than this one thing. But the proper making of ourselves ready means the helping of others as we have opportunity, especially the brethren who are walking this same Heavenly way with us. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren. This is an important part of our preparation. We are to build up ourselves and also the brethren in the most holy faith.

We hope, then, dear friends, that we are getting ready for the marriage of the Lamb, for our marriage to the Lamb. Something that we may do or fail to do today may have a bearing upon our final readiness. Our minds are the foundation for everything in this matter. The Lord knows that we have imperfect bodies. So the testing will not be as to whether our bodies are perfect, but whether our hearts are perfect. If our heart is perfect before God, we shall bring our words, our actions and our thoughts into harmony with the Law of Love to the extent of our ability. If we see to it that we **keep** our hearts thus loyal, we shall become more and more a copy of God's dear Son, our Heavenly Bridegroom; and we shall enter in due time with exceeding joy into our "house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." Then our Lord will present us before the Father—the "Bride adorned for her Husband": He will present us with exceeding joy, **blameless.**

Oh, the blessedness of this thought! **Can we be blameless?** If we reach the Kingdom, dear brethren, we shall indeed be blameless! Meantime, our characters are to be blameless here. God would never blame us for things we could not help, but only for the things we could help; and He has made an arrangement whereby if we have made mistakes we can go to the Fountain of cleansing. If we strive to do our best, and if we go daily, or oftener if necessary, to the Mercy Seat for pardon and cleansing, we shall be spotless in the Father's sight; and in His own due time He will give us perfect bodies like our Lord's. Then we shall be perfect in the most absolute sense.

So long as we stay in the imperfect flesh we shall need the Throne of Heavenly Grace. We shall need mercy and assistance from the Lord every day. If we are faithful at heart, our mistakes will help us to be more watchful, more positive, than before. The Lord so arranges His providence as to teach us the necessary lessons. As we grow in the Divine likeness, we shall more and more come to love as God andChrist love—to love character, to love the principles of righteousness. We have never seen God or Christ with our physical eyes, yet we love them above all else. (1 Peter 1:8.) We have never seen the Apostle Paul, or the Apostle John, yet we love them; for we know their characters are lovable and worthy of admiration. We love the personality which shines from their writings, the beauty of their spirit. We love St. Paul because he counted all things but loss and dross that he might win Christ and be found in Him. We are to love whatever is good and noble and worthy, and in proportion as it is so.

What do we love in each other? Is it the shape of the head, the symmetry of the features, the cut or style of the clothing? Oh, no! We love one another in proportion as we see the Master's likeness in each other. If one is much like Jesus, we love such a one all the more. This is the Heavenly, the spiritual love. This is the kind of love which we are to cultivate day by day. All other affections are to be entirely secondary. Let our love and esteem be for the things that are highly esteemed in the sight of God; let these be more beautiful to us than all else, that we may become like unto our Father in Heaven.—Z. '16:163-165.

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Notwithstanding our fallen condition, parents love to give good gifts to their children. What parent, if his child should ask for a fish, would give him a serpent? Or if he should ask for bread, would give him a stone? And as we have received these traits from the Lord, and still have them to a considerable extent even in our blemished condition, we may form some idea of how He who is the Perfect One, the Infinite One, would delight to give good gifts to His children—"**How much more** shall your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" And His very best things are the spiritual things.—Z. '16:21.

◇

We are justified by faith, nevertheless, works will be required. By our works we must demonstrate our faith, and, thank God, imperfect works can demonstrate to him the loyalty of our intentions, our wills. Hence the Apostle James says, "I will show thee my faith by my works," and to this all the Scriptures agree. If our works demonstrate to the Lord the sincerity of our faith, that faith will be acceptable to him and we will be counted perfect and be granted a share in the Kingdom, great and precious things which the Lord has in reservation for those who love him—not merely in word but also in deeds—for those who strive by the deeds of life to show forth, to demonstrate, their love.—Z. '04:45.

◇

Everything in the divine plan is being made to wait until the Very Elect shall have been gathered from the four winds of heaven, until the Bride of Christ shall have made herself ready, until the polishing processes shall have made the jewels meet for the Master's use, and then by the resurrection change these may pass to glory, honor and immortality. "Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown an animal body, raised a spiritual body!" "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, and share his glory."—Z. '08:90.

If we merely attempt to serve the Lord in an outward way ceremoniously and nominally, it will be but a little while until insidiously the world, the flesh and the Adversary will draw our attention and energies away from the Lord to various things, entangling them in various earthly alliances and worships that will mean spiritual poverty and lukewarmness, if not absolute coldness of heart towards the Lord.—Z. '02:315.

◇

Those who have the mind of Christ are never persecutors. They feel it to be their bounden duty not to assist things which they believe to be wrong; they may even find it necessary or expedient to denounce the wrong, to show up its inconsistencies, and in some instances to name the active agents in wrong teachings and wrong doings—as the Apostles have done in their writings. But as for persecuting others, the Lord's people can take no part in this. They are hindered by the spirit of love, the mind of Christ, which directs that we should do to others, as we would have them do to us—the Golden Rule, our "perfect law of liberty."—Z. '16:92.

◇

The servant who hid his talent in the earth, and who failed to use it, endeavored to justify his course by blaming the Master with being too hard and exacting. And so it is with many, who having taken upon themselves the vows of consecration to the Lord, subsequently fail to perform them. They are disposed to blame the Lord rather than to blame themselves; and this course indicates what their real lack is.—Love. They do not love the Lord fully, truly, sufficiently, and their course reveals this fact. Had they loved him they would have delighted to do to their ability his will; and only such are blessed with rewards.—Z. '01:61.

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J H Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 99

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD: AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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A Letter from Brother Russell

Dear Brother: . . . I very much appreciate the spirit of your closing remark. (Believe me, dear Brother, although never having seen you, yet I feel very near to you.) I think that is how all who truly love the Lord feel toward each other. We are **one** with him, and love binds us more and more closely to him and each other as we see his spirit, "the spirit of a sound mind," manifested in each other and working out in the life.

You have been growing very fast in the knowledge of the truth, dear Brother; in just a few months you have partaken of much "strong meat;" to use another figure, you have been putting on the "armor" very rapidly. All this is for a purpose: that you may have the strength and the proper armor to enable you **to stand** in this evil day; and not only to stand yourself, but also to protect and assist others. You must use the shield of faith to resist the fiery darts of the adversary, coming from many directions, and learn to handle skilfully "the sword of the spirit," which is the Word of God, as well as to have your intellect protected by the helmet of salvation.

Now I suggest that you re-examine your armor to see if you have on each necessary piece, in its proper place; in order that you may not be taken unawares when the battle grows hotter. In other words, that you go back and read again what you have received, so as to make it entirely your own. As in armor the shield does not change into the sword, or the helmet into the breastplate, or the one usurp the particular office of the other, so each distinct feature in the plan of salvation retains its own place and use in the general whole; and as there are only a certain number of pieces in a suit of armor, and when you have them on you need no more, only to see that they fit together and are tightly fastened, leaving no crevice for a stray arrow to penetrate, so with the truth: once a truth, **always a truth,** and needing only to be properly adjusted, secured and **used;** and no more can be piled on without disastrous effects, weighting one down with a multitude of pieces of unnecessary or poor armor which would permit the enemy to overpower and capture.

It is necessary to consider these things, because the Adversary, seeing that you and others cannot be hindered from **studying** the truth, transforms himself into an angel of light, and tries to lead such **beyond the true light into realms of unwarranted speculation** which in the end carries the expectant and eager student as far or farther **away** than the nominal church or some less subtle foe could at the beginning of his studies. A time will come when we shall know all things, even as we are known; and as we approach nearer to the end of our earthly course and apprehend more fully the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of our Father's plan, we must learn to take the same pleasure in its **completeness** that we formerly did in searching out "deep things"—just as God enjoys the grand and good and **finished** features of his work.

We should expect completeness now, so far as God's revelation is concerned, because such was the promise. For instance, Daniel was told, "Go thy way, Daniel, for the thing is closed up and sealed until the time of the end—then (1) many shall run to and fro, (2) knowledge shall be increased, (3) the [truly] wise shall understand, . . . and (4) at that time Michael [Christ] shall stand up . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." Here, then, we have an assurance that the truly wise **will** understand, or as the Apostle says, speaking of the same class and the present time, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." And as our Lord promised (to his people throughout this age), "Ye shall **know** the truth," and "If any man will do my Father's will he shall know of my doctrine." Then again, we have the assurance that, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel ['seventh trumpet']—when he shall **begin to sound**—the **mystery of God** [His plan and his Church] **shall be finished**"—matters **"kept secret from the foundation of the world."**—Rev. 10:7; Matt. 13:35.

I mention these points, dear Brother, because the tempter will sooner or later bring to you as to others suggestions of doubt and uncertainty upon the very points which now you see so clearly, and for which there is such abundant proof in God's Word. These suggestions will be **human** speculations, "May be" and "What if" and "Who knows," which finally end in the "outer darkness" of agnosticism, in which the worldly-wise have always wandered, and into which the nominal church is fast falling. . . .

When unscriptural suggestions of the Adversary (based upon purely human reasoning) come, the **test** begins. If your faith is built upon the wisdom of men, you will begin to say: **My wisdom** is just as good as that of Brother Russell or any other man, and **I will think for myself.** Then you will begin to imagine how things **might be;** and the Adversary will send you plenty of assistance in turning and twisting every Scripture statement seeming to interfere with **your opinions.** . . .

But the person infatuated with his **own thinking** and bent on making some new light for himself cannot be stopped by reason based on Scripture. So he is merely stunned by his reasoning. He hesitates but a short time, and then decides—**my thinking** must be right. . . . And soon he begins twisting and turning language in every conceivable form to get rid of the statements so clearly set forth in Scripture, in which he at first delighted as the very bulwarks of the good tidings of great joy for all people—that "Christ died for our sins"—that "he died the just one for the unjust" that he might "open up for us a new way of life" and "bring us to God." He may or may not hold to the word **ransom** and affect to hold to the Bible's teaching, but **in fact** all such deny the ransom and the entire plan of salvation which God has revealed—whatever of their own or other men's wisdom they may adopt instead.

So, dear Brother, you see my solicitude for you. . . . I would have your faith rest not in the wisdom of man—(neither my wisdom nor your own nor any other man's) but in the wisdom of God and in the power of God as revealed to us, his children, through his Word.—1 Cor. 1:24.

May the Lord bless you and your associates—"establish, strengthen, settle you," and fit you for usefulness in His work.

Yours in our Redeemer.

—Editor.

—Z. '92:220-222.

The King's Daughter, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife

"The King's Daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of fine needlework."—Psa. 45:13, 14.

OUR TEXT poetically and pictorially draws our attention to one of those beautiful figures by which the close and dear relationship between Christ and His Elect Church is Scripturally portrayed. Whether it be the figure of the Captain and his Soldiers, the Shepherd and his Sheep, the Master and his Servants, the Head and the Body members, or the Bridegroom and the Bride, each illustration of our Lord's relationship to the Church carries its own important lesson.

But surely none of them is more important or more beautiful than the one we are now considering—our Lord, the King's Son, highly exalted to Jehovah's right hand on the Throne, and the Church in glory, his Queen and joint-heir with him in his Millennial Kingdom soon to be established.

The study of these pictures of heavenly things is intended to lift the minds of the "new creation," God's spiritual sons, from things earthly and sensual to the things eternal, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him supremely."—1 Cor. 2, 9.

The preceding verses of the Psalm describe the grandeur of the Heavenly Bridegroom—that in his earthly life he was fairer than the children of men; that Divine grace was poured from his lips, and that the Father, because of his faithfulness, greatly blessed and exalted him. Next it tells of the inauguration of his Millennial Kingdom at his second advent, when as the Mighty One he will come forth in glory and majesty, conquering Satan, sin and death.

We are assured that prosperity will attend and truth, mercy and righteousness will be established in the earth, even though it be accomplished by a great time of trouble. His arrows of Divine truth are represented as piercing all of his opponents to the heart, even as the Apostle's words on the Day of Pentecost pricked his hearers and cut them to the heart and led them to cry out, "What must we do to be saved!"

Thus will the people fall before the rising Kingdom of Righteousness. Every knee must bend and every tongue confess. All who will decline to do so under those favorable conditions of full knowledge will be utterly "destroyed from amongst the people." (Acts 3:23.) Then the declaration is made. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of thy Kingdom is a right scepter. God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

"The Queen and the Gold of Ophir"

The picture is in the future. At the present time the Church is not the Queen, not the Bride, not in the glorious garments: she is merely the "espoused virgin," called to Brideship. At present she is in her body of humiliation, or "vile body," according to the statement of our Common Version. But she shall be "changed" in the First Resurrection, and thereafter be the "Glorious Body," the Glorious Bride. (Phil. 3:21.) Now she is a mixed company, and "strangers" commingle, who are not virgins at all. The testing time is not yet finished. . . .

We cannot wonder that some refuse to believe that so great an honor has been provided for the "elect" Church. It is almost too wonderful that this, which the Apostle terms "our high calling," and "our heavenly calling," is an invitation for us to step, not only out of sin, but from the earthly plane of being, a little lower than the angels, principalities and powers, to the divine nature. Yet here are the Apostle's words, and what else can we make of them? He tells us that God has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4.) It is proper for the Lord's people to accept these great things with that simplicity which the Scriptures tell us is best illustrated in a "little child"—"nothing doubting." Says St. Paul: "He who hath freely given us Christ, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

St. John assents, saying: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God (even in our imperfect condition), but it does not yet appear what we shall be (how glorious); but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) To be with him, to share his glory, to be like him, who is the express image of the Father's person, is the highest possible conception we can have of the glorious things which God hath in reservation for them that love him supremely.

Raiment of Fine Needlework

Look again at the Queen and her glorious apparel. Notice the pure linen, clean and white, representative of her purity and righteousness. Remember that she was once of the world. her members "children of wrath. even as others." Remember that by faith she accepted the merit of her Redeemer's sacrifice and thus she was reckonedly covered with his robe of righteousness. which the world saw not. but which the heavenly father regarded. Remember. that it was because of that robe covering her natural blemishes that she was permitted to consecrate herself and to become the espoused virgin of her Anointed Redeemer and prospectively his joint-heir in the Kingdom. How wonderful these steps of grace! Looking but a little way into the future. we behold her clothed. not with an imputed robe of righteousness. but with her own robe of righteousness. The imputed one was hers to wear up to the time of her change from earthly to spiritual nature in the First Resurrection. Then and there perfected. it became actual. On the spirit plane she becomes righteous without spot. without blemish. a suitable companion and joint-heir for the great King of Glory.

But look more closely. Note that the robe of fine linen is beautifully embroidered—"fine needlework." This, too. must have significance. The embroidered figures represent the graces of the Spirit. meekness. gentleness. patience. long suffering. brotherly kindness. love. Ah. yes. the Queen indeed is all-glorious within and without. The power of the Lord will accomplish this. She is his workmanship. though not without her own willingness and cooperation. The Lord's operation upon her will be through his Word and by his Spirit: and in proportion as she yields herself thereto she is now being "changed from glory to glory." and. by the final change. will be perfected. glorified.

We noted a difference between the imputed robe which the betrothed wears now and the one which she will possess when changed—that the present one is Christ's imputed robe covering her blemishes. and that the glorious one of the future will be her own righteousness. "the righteousness of the saints." Let us notice also that there is an embroidery connected with them both. The robe that is now imputed to us has stamped upon it the gracious designs or patterns which our Lord would inculcate and which he assures us will be advantageous to us. pleasing to him and necessary to our future glory.

Our appreciation of our high calling, our faith in it and our love for the heavenly Bridegroom and desire to be pleasing to him are the incentives to us. urging us to spend every hour. every moment possible. in the working out of the glorious embroidery designs stamped upon our robe. Each stitch must be taken carefully—painstakingly. Each feature of the outline must be carefully studied. The robe itself must be kept clean. spotless. Who is sufficient for these things? Surely only those truly betrothed to the heavenly King. and who love him with all their hearts. and who are waiting in faith and patience for his promised Second Coming to receive the Bride unto himself and to establish his Kingdom for the blessing and uplifting of the world!

Adding to Faith

St. Paul tells of this embroidery work and the adding of stitch to stitch in its development, saying: "Tribulation worketh patience. and patience. experience; and experience. hope; and hope maketh not ashamed. because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. which is given to us." (Rom. 5:3-5.) St. Peter says: "Add to your faith. virtue; and to virtue. knowledge; and to knowledge. temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience. godliness; and to godliness. brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness. love. For if these things be in you and abound. they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-11.)

When we think of the imperfection of our very best endeavors along the lines of this embroidery work. this development of the graces of the Holy Spirit. we ask ourselves. "Whose garment would be fit to wear in the presence of the Father and of the holy angels?" The answer is. "None of them." It is in harmony with this that we see that the Lord has provided something different. He allows us to practice upon our robe of imputed righteousness. but the new robe which he will give us as our own will be absolutely perfect. as well as glorious.

There will not be a flaw in the embroidery. How so? Because that glorious dress of perfect righteousness will be given only to those who have earnestly desired it. however short of it were their best endeavors. Inasmuch as their hearts were perfect. inasmuch as their endeavors were for perfection. the Lord will accept the heart and its endeavors, and grant that the new bodies shall possess to full perfection all these glorious traits and qualities which were the Bride's ideal and endeavor in her betrothed condition. when she practiced upon the imputed robe.

So in the Psalm under consideration; the Prophet says. "Hearken. O daughter and consider and incline thine ear." The world says. "Look. see. and be attracted by the things of this present time." The Lord says. "Hearken. consider that the present life, at the very most. is brief and that in the Lord's providence. under our call. we have an opportunity to sacrifice it and thus to gain the highest of all blessings in the eternal life of the future."

"The "foolish virgins" do not hearken enough to the voice from heaven, to the words of Jesus, the Apostles and Prophets. They are more or less absorbed with the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches. and thus do not fully please the Lord, even though. because of loyalty to him. he will by and by give them a good portion. The "wise virgins." who will constitute the elect, the Bride in glory, do hearken. do consider and are guided by the counsel from on high. and press with vigor on in the narrow way of self-sacrifice. which leads to the Kingdom glory.

The King Shall Desire Thy Beauty; He Is Thy Lord, Worship Him

The Psalmist proceeds. "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord and worship thou him." Ah! there is the thought. If we rightly admire the King; if we rightly appreciate the wonderful privileges granted us of being now his espoused, as under his loving protection and provision, and by and by his bride and joint-heir in glory; if we appreciate these things, surely all earthly things and interests will necessarily fade, because of their comparative insignificance. And these are the terms upon which the King will desire us as members of his glorious bride. He will not consign us to demons and eternal torment, if we fail to rightly appreciate this situation, and, while not repudiating his love and grace, give a portion of our love to our father's house and our own people, the world; but he will not choose us as members of his bride class, unless this condition of full consecration to him be the attitude of our hearts. Surely this is not unreasonable. Had we been called even from the ranks of the highest order of angels to be joint-heirs with the King of glory, the honor conferred would have been so great as to merit an undivided love, devotion. Surely, then, we, redeemed by his precious blood from our fallen, sinful state, and then invited to share his glory on the divine plane, should be so enthused, so filled with appreciation of the honor proffered, that we would gladly, willingly, voluntarily, lay aside every earthly weight and interest and strive with patience and loving devotion to attain the prize of the high calling set before us of joint-heirship with the King of kings and Lord of Lords.—B.S.M., Vol. 9:3:3.

"That Ye Bear Much Fruit"

Matt. 13:23.

"HEREIN is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit," said our Master. In this parable the good ground varies in its productiveness—thirty, sixty and an hundred fold. The larger the returns, the greater will be the Father's pleasure and the Savior's glory. Nor is the statement an extreme one, as some might suppose. . . . This parable seems to imply that the responsibility for the fruitfulness of the heart and life and character depends very greatly upon the individual and how he receives the message of the Kingdom. Those in whom the fruits will be the most abundant will be such as grasp the invitation most intelligently and earnestly. "He that heareth the word and understandeth it" and whose heart is in a condition of loyalty to God and who frees himself from hindrances and worldly ambitions and aspirations and, like the Apostle Paul, can say, "This one thing I do," will surely gain the Kingdom.

It is not sufficient that we hear the message of the Kingdom; it is not sufficient that we have good hearts or good intentions in respect to it; it is additionally necessary, as the Master says, that we should understand the Kingdom message; hence the need of Bible study. Intelligent people consider it very wise and proper that several years of study be devoted to preparation for the few years of earthly life. How much study, then, should be considered proper for our preparation for the eternal life and Kingdom blessings? The time and effort thus consumed in character development for the Kingdom are wisely spent, and the harvest of thirty, sixty or a hundred-fold illustrates the degree and intensity of our earnestness. The rewards in the Kingdom will also be proportionate. "As star differeth from star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead." Varying degrees of glory in the Kingdom will be manifested, yet none will be acceptable to the Father who shall not have brought forth fruitage in good measure; the "well done" will never be pronounced if not merited.—Z. '10:203.

Who Is Wise Among You?

"WHO is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?" inquires the Apostle James (Jas. 3:13); and the question is one which all may consider with profit. Many indeed are endued with considerable knowledge, who display but little wisdom. Knowledge truly is of great importance, but it is only as it develops wisdom—sound judgment and pure and high-toned sentiment. This is the main object of God's revelation of himself to us. And the wisdom that comes thus, through the channel of divine truth, the Apostle describes as, "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."—Verse 17.

Such a character is the result of the transforming influence of divine truth. God's revelation is a mirror of his character, in which we see reflected his purity and love and goodness; and as we therein trace the lines of his glorious character the desire grows and strengthens to be more like him whom we thus learn to admire and love. The sincere heart, accepting the divine plan and its gracious provisions of salvation and blessing through Christ, at once begins to fashion itself in conformity with God's character by first putting away sin and then by striving daily to live a life of purity and holiness. With this effort come in the peace of God and the love of God, to rule and take possession of the whole man. And when the heart is thus cleansed and filled with God, the fruits of such an indwelling life-principle become very manifest to all beholders, in gentleness, mercy, goodness, and pure and holy friendship with all who are like-minded.

In contrast with this wisdom which cometh down from above the Apostle mentions another kind, which he describes as earthly, sensual, devilish. It is a wisdom or low cunning which is prompted by a spirit of envy and strife, and is always productive of "confusion and every evil work." Pride and selfishness are the inspiration of this kind of wisdom, just as in the case of Satan; and therefore let every one who names the name of Christ keep very humble. To harbor such a spirit of malice, of bitter envy and strife, while still professing to have the spirit of truth, the Apostle describes as "lying against the truth." God forbid that it should find place in the hearts of any who have thus far been faithful and have run well.

How carefully we need to guard our hearts against the slightest rising of pride and worldly ambition, and against every root of bitterness which, springing up, might trouble us. There are thousands of occurrences and circumstances in life which are calculated to bring us into bondage to the spirit of the world, and only those who keep a vigilant watch and an ever-prayerful attitude can hope to be kept in this evil day. Temptations and trials seldom give us warning of their approach, and therefore our armor of righteousness must ever be adjusted and securely buckled on.

"Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul;
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole."

Heed carefully the Apostle's instruction—"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show by honorable conduct his works with meekness of wisdom." It is by our conduct and not by our professions that we are to be judged: and if any man have the true heavenly wisdom which is always coupled with meekness—humility—it will surely manifest itself in a straightforward, manly, honorable course of conduct, dictated by the wisdom which cometh down from above, which is always pure [unselfish], peaceable, gentle, compassionate and sincere.

May the Lord grant to all his loyal sons an abundance of this heavenly wisdom and the rich rewards of grace and peace that always accompany it. Put away all these—Malice, Envy, Hatred, Selfish-ambitions—and put on those adornments of Christ's spirit—Humility, Gentleness, Generosity, Meekness, Love. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ [in some degree] he is none of his." And he in whom these graces are not being cultivated and increased will soon lose them and be choked with the selfish and ignoble spirit of the world.

There are some of the children of the world who have cultivated outward gentleness and benevolence for policy's sake, whose hearts, as privately expressed, are full of bitterness, envy and selfishness; and there are some of God's children who naturally are very selfish and mean, but whose changed hearts are fighting against the weaknesses of the flesh, and who afterward repent of selfishness and meanness. But let such press along the line and seek for grace to help in every time of need. Their progress toward the likeness of Christ will gradually manifest itself to them and to others. "If the spirit of Christ dwell in you, he [God] that raised up Christ from the dead [has also the power and] will also quicken [to activity in his service and to his praise, in the present life] your mortal bodies."

Here, then, we have the earthly wisdom which is based upon **selfishness** contrasted with the heavenly wisdom based upon **love and service** to others. Whoever is really wise will choose the heavenly—the end of which, in Christ, is everlasting life.—Z. '92:281, 282.

Cheerful Christians!

"Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."—Mark 6:50.

WHILE it is enjoined upon the Lord's followers to be sober and earnest and moderate in all of life's affairs, it is a mistake to suppose that this means they must be morose, gloomy, or have a dejected appearance. Quite to the contrary. Everything in Scripture agrees with the facts as we know them, that those who are full of faith in the Lord and in his Word, and whose hearts are fully consecrated to his service, are cheerful, happy, even in the midst of unsatisfactory and even painful conditions. It is true also that their faces show this cheerfulness of their hearts. They have less of the worried and anxious look, are less fearful and foreboding. The calm of joy and peace resulting from their relationship to the Lord and their reception of his holy Spirit shows itself not only in their tone of voice but in the glance of the eye; and gradually, if this be the result of an acute conversion, the wrinkles and other marks of care will begin to fade, although they may not fully pass away.

There is a difference, however. We are not merely describing nominal Christians, but the very special class of Christians who know their Lord and are known of him, who have pledged themselves to walk in his footsteps in the narrow way, and who are seeking daily to lay aside every weight and every besetting sin that they may run with patience the race set before them. (Heb. 12:1). On the contrary, one may attend divine service in large Church buildings and scan the faces of those whom he meets, and find on them all the various marks that belong to sin and care and sorrow and pain and trouble. . . .

Good Cheer in Trouble

It is easy enough to be of good cheer under favorable conditions, mental, moral and physical, and with happy associations and surroundings. All who are truly the Lord's people, who have attained any measure of development in the knowledge of his plan, should be cheerful under such circumstances—especially when associating with fellow Christians, singing the divine praises and approaching the throne of grace as in the Church gatherings. The happy faces which we see at Church are not always a token of what we would see if we saw the same people in the everyday affairs of life. To illustrate our point: Not long since four of the brethren met with a nominal Church man, a stranger to them, to attend to a little job which proved very tantalizing and patience-wearing to them all for nearly three hours. As they parted the nominal Church member said, "Gentlemen, when I go home I am going to tell my wife that I met four men who, under very trying circumstances, did not swear." The gentleman did not understand the reason lying behind the perplexity and the fretting circumstances which kept the brethren serene.

Peace in the Heart

We may be sure, however, from his own words, that their living epistles were not entirely lost in this case. The brethren, through a better knowledge of the Lord, the result of their better faith and fuller consecration, had what the Lord promised they should have, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, ruling in their hearts. The world and the nominal Church tell us that doctrine is of no particular consequence, that the important matter is honesty and proper living. But, on the contrary, we tell them that doctrine is all important. The man who has not the proper doctrine before his mind lacks the very power which God intended should work in him to will and to do the divine good pleasure. The man who has not taken the Lord's prescription is still sick, is still in pain, is still in trouble, and the anxious care and trouble show upon his face. The Lord has invited all the weary and the heavy laden to come to him and find rest, and when this course has been followed and the rest has come to the heart it is always sure to manifest itself on the features and in the conduct.

"Be Not Afraid: It Is I."

Our text is a part of a little narrative: Jesus had been with his disciples on the farther shore of Lake Galilee; he remained behind but sent them away in the ship. A storm arose, the wind was contrary, they were tossed by the waves and made no progress: they were still in the midst of the sea and troubled. They had learned from previous experiences that while the Master was with them all would be safe, but now he was absent. We may be sure that he remained behind for this very purpose, that they might have the very experiences which they encountered, that they might feel troubled by the tempest's tossings and the dangers undergone, and that he might teach them a lesson thereby, a lesson respecting his providential care. In the severity of their trouble they beheld Jesus walking toward them on the water. They were doubly affrighted, and supposed that they saw a hobgoblin, a phantom, in harmony with stories always told by the seafaring; they were in terror, not only by reason of the storm, but now by reason of their fears. Then Jesus spoke to them in the words of our text, "Be of good cheer: It is I; be not afraid." Cast away your fear, learn to look to me, to remember that having become my disciples I have supervision over all your affairs whether in storm or in calm; all things are subject to my supervision and shall be ordered for your best interests.

The Lesson for Us

We may be sure, too, that this lesson was not taught the disciples merely on their own account, but, like all other of our Lord's teachings and parables and miracles, they foreshadowed things to come, and were really lessons, instructions, along spiritual lines. The lesson intended for the Lord's true followers is that in all the storms and trials and difficulties and perplexities of life they may remember that, having put their interests and affairs into the hands of the Lord Jesus, he is both able and willing to keep that which has been committed to his trust.

"When the storms of life are raging,
Tempests wild on sea and land,
I have found a place of refuge
In the shadow of God's hand.

"Enemies may strive to injure,
Satan all his arts employ;
God will turn what seems to harm me
Into everlasting joy."

It is not for the world, including the merely nominal Christian, to have this confidence in the Lord. It is better for them that they be undeceived. Not having committed their all to the Lord's care he has given them no assurance respecting his willingness to make all things work together for their welfare. Such promises belong only to the disciples of Christ, the followers of Jesus, the consecrated. It is better for the others that they should still stumble and realize their own weariness with their heavy load. All the more likely they will be inclined some day or other to see the difference between their own standing and that of the truly consecrated, and to come into a relationship with the Lord which will guarantee to them the easy yoke and light burden which the Lord promises to all who are his true followers.

Perfect Love, No Fear

The Scriptures declare that perfect love casteth out fear, and this is the Christian's secret of a happy day. Having learned of the grace of God in Christ in the redemption, having accepted this grace and realized his sins forgiven, he is at peace with God, and having consecrated his justified heart to the Lord and to the service of the Truth he has made progress. Eating the Lord's Word, growing strong in the Lord and the power of his might, he has come to know more and more of the Lord's true character, that God is love; and as he has learned to love in return, in the same proportion has the love cast out the fear. Not only does perfect love for God cast out fear of him, but it also casts out the fear of all troubles and danger, both real and fancied. When we know of God's goodness, when we know also of his promises for our protection and care, when we have his assurance that all things shall work together for good, we have indeed the true basis for fearlessness, for confidence, for hope, for joy and peace and blessing.

Such Christians, instructed by the Word of the Lord and full of love for him and confidence in his love in return, are able to look to the Lord in all the storms and trials and difficulties of life, and to hear his voice in all the trying circumstances, saying, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." They have learned not to question why the storms and trials of life are permitted; they have learned that they are all for the development of faith and patience and the various graces of the Lord's Spirit in us, and hence when trials come they know it is all for the best and a blessing from the Lord, as we read, "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." (Heb. 12:11.) And so, after having had experiences and disciplines in this life, those who are the Lord's true people, who have made progress in the knowledge of him and who have had experience in the school of Christ, learning these necessary lessons, instead of beginning to mourn when the trials and storms and clouds of trouble gather, by faith will be able to hear the Master's voice, by faith will be able to discern that it is the great Teacher who has given them another lesson, and their hearts being fully submissive and anxious to learn, they rejoice therein.

The Apostle points out to us that the Christian's course should always be one of rejoicing. His own experience is an example of what he meant. He did not mean that the Christian should expect to be exempt from trials and difficulties, which properly enough would be a ground for sorrow and sadness and trouble; he did mean, being rightly informed respecting the object of these lessons and experiences, the Lord's faithful ones would rejoice in them as evidences that they were still in the school of Christ, still in preparation for the Kingdom.

O, what comfort it gives to our hearts when trials arise! Sometimes from the actual difficulties of life with which we are surrounded, with the waves of trouble that nearly swamped the boat of the disciples—sometimes in our experiences as little congregations of the Lord's people, and sometimes in our personal or family experiences, how comforting to think that the Lord is near, that nothing could harm us except by his permission, that not even a hair of our heads could fall without our Father's notice. No wonder that with such assurances our faces and hearts may always be calm in the midst of storm; no wonder if the hobgoblins of fear, which often cause the world more distress than its actual difficulties, are as nothing to us. Why should we fear? Greater is he that is on our part than all that could be against us. Whatever may be the trials or difficulties of the pathway, the end is sure to justify every pain, every sorrow, every disappointment—we have the Lord's Word for it.

Why should we sorrow as those who have no hope? We have a hope that is, as the Apostle explains, "an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, within the vail." God's love, as manifested in the redemption, as testified by our Lord Jesus and by the holy Spirit speaking through the apostles, gives us all the assurance that we could ask that his love is not ephemeral, not transitory, but abiding. The fact that he followed up the redemption by the adoption, and now we are by his grace heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord if so be that we suffer with him, gives us assurance respecting the divine purpose, and hinders us from being overwhelmed by the waves of present trouble and distress and protects us from the fears common to the remainder of mankind.

"And Again I Say, Rejoice"

Having seen the ground of our proper rejoicing, having found that it is the result of heart-relationship to the Lord and instruction from his Word, let us have a few words of testimony from the apostles respecting this matter—showing what manner of persons we ought to be, not only in all holy conversation and godliness, but also in enjoying the divine blessings. . . .

Our Lord, when telling the disciples of the disappointments they would have in respect to the crucifixion and the blasting of their hopes, declared that later on they would have the reverse of this, rejoicing. He said, "I will see you again [I will reveal myself to you] and your hearts shall rejoice." (John 16:22.) So we, like the disciples, rejoice not merely that our Lord died as our Redeemer but that he rose again from the dead, and that not only is he to reveal himself in the end of the age at his second advent shortly, blessing all the families of the world, but that all through the Gospel age he has been spiritually present with his disciples to bless, refresh, comfort and strengthen us.

The Apostle tells us another cause for rejoicing which we have, assuring us that we not only have been justified by God's favor but have been granted also an entrance into still higher favor, in which we now stand, "Rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:2.) We have good cause for rejoicing in the hope of coming glory, not only because it means blessing to ourselves and intimacy with our Lord, but because also it means our participation with the great Messiah in extending divine blessings to the world of mankind. Again we read the Apostle's testimony even in the midst of trials and difficulties, even in the midst of suffering for righteousness' sake, for the Truth's sake, even while enduring hardness as a good soldier. He says, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."—Phil. 1:18.

The Apostle gave us a good illustration of this spirit, one which should be helpful to all of us: We remember that when he and Silas were in prison at Philippi, their backs bleeding from the wounds received from the scourging and wet also with the salt, as was the custom in order to make the suffering more intense, so full were their hearts of faith in the Lord and the realization that they were suffering for Christ's sake, suffering for righteousness' sake, that the blessing of the Lord was with them and eventually would compensate them for their sorrow and trouble, that they were able through their abundant faith to so rejoice as to sing praises to God in prison. The Apostle continues, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 3:1), as though he would tell us that the grand climacteric of Christian experience is this ability to rejoice in all the affairs of life as they come to us, rejoice that we can see Jesus and hear his voice, saying, "It is I: be not afraid," and appreciate the fact that all of life's experiences are under divine supervision and will work out for us a blessing. It was this same spirit of faith and confidence in our Lord Jesus that enabled him to say in his most trying moment, "The cup that the Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?"—John 18:11.

The Apostle James, writing along the line of rejoicing, says, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice that he is exalted, but the rich that he is made low." (Jas. 1:9, 10.) This is the same thought which the Apostle Paul enunciates: our experiences, whatever they may be, should be recognized as under divine supervision, protection and guidance, and therefore a matter of rejoicing to us, however disappointing our experiences may sometimes be as viewed from the earthly or fleshly standpoint. The Apostle Peter has a word in the same connection. He says, addressing the heirs of the incorruptible inheritance, "Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:6, 7.) Here is the thought: we rejoice greatly in our manifold temptations because we realize that these are evidences of our acceptance with the Lord, and that he is dealing with us as sons, and that he is polishing us as jewels for the Kingdom.

Those who can rejoice with joy unspeakable, even in the midst of temptations and trials and difficulties, surely belong to the class whom the Lord addresses in our text, "Be of good cheer; it is I: be not afraid." It is because they have heard this voice and have come into harmony with the speaker that they find cause for rejoicing under all circumstances and conditions.—Q. '05: 7:1-4.

The Purpose of Our Trials

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."—James 1:12.

THE WORD **blessed** in this text may be understood to signify the condition of one in the favor of God. The state of such will be a happy one, a desirable one. The word blessed does not, of course, always suggest a happy condition as relates to the feelings, or emotions, but rather as relates to the outcome. It is used here in connection with the results of trial to the Christian. The child of God who wins the crown of life will be very highly favored or blessed of God; then **whatever conduces to this end is a very great blessing**, even though it cause much pain to the flesh.

Who will gain this crown of life? Of what character will he be? The Scriptures declare that it will be that man or that woman who endures temptation, trial. What is signified by **enduring** temptation? Evidently the thought is not the enduring of one temptation for one time or for many times. Even the world must endure trials. The reference is to the retaining permanently of the attitude of **patient** endurance and faithfulness when tempted, of remaining true to God under temptation and stress. Temptations come from a variety of sources. They may come from friends, who may tempt us to live a life of more or less self-indulgence, to relax in a measure our fidelity to the Lord. The enticements of wealth or worldly society, a natural love of ease and disinclination of the flesh to endure hardness—any or all of these may prove strong and subtle temptations to the Christian.

But if we love the Lord supremely, that love will become the chief impulse of our lives. Our one aim will be that we may glorify God in our spirit and in our body. We know that there are things which are displeasing to God, and if we love Him we will seek to keep His commandments. The child of God might fail once, or he might fail repeatedly along the same line, until in deep humiliation and anguish of soul because of his continued manifestation of the same weakness, he would be led to cry out with strong crying and tears to the Lord; and his pain and distress of heart might so impress upon him his need of greater watchfulness along that line that he would become strengthened for further attacks of the same nature, and thus be enabled to gain the victory over his besetment, his special weakness.

The Crown of Righteousness

While we shall never reach the point of perfection in the flesh, nevertheless this power to endure temptation should become more marked day by day, as the New Creature remains loyal, still resisting and striving still harder to resist and be true to the Lord in thought and word and deed. Blessed is the man who shall endure—time after time, day after day—thus proving his faithfulness and obedience to God. For when that man is tried, when the trial time is over, when God has seen that he has demonstrated fully his loyalty, then, when God's "due time" has come, that tried and proven one shall receive the crown of life.

The expression, "the crown of life," is another way of saying the **reward** of life; and this life is on the highest plane. The Apostle Paul speaks of this same crown as the "crown of righteousness." The Apostle Peter calls it the "crown of glory." It is the crown of **righteousness** because it is the reward that comes as the result of righteousness, of obedience to God and the principles of His Government, of faithfulness to our covenant. It is the crown of **glory** because it is the reward which brings glory, honor, immortality.

In the Grecian games certain rewards were given to those who endured successfully the trial of their skill, of their prowess and of their physical endurance. The reward given was usually a crown or wreath of laurel. That crown was valuable, not so much in itself, but especially as an outward token of appreciation of superior merit. The fact that it was evergreen would suggest to the Christian that our reward as "overcomers" will be a lasting reward, an eternal reward.

The Lord is to give us life in fullest measure. The penalty that came upon our race because of sin was death; but now there is an opportunity to regain life—life in perfection, untainted, unending. This life is in the Son of God. . . . The crown of life, to be given to the "more than conquerors," is a very special kind of life—immortality, the highest form of life possible, the crown, or pinnacle, of all life. This is to be the reward of the class called in Scripture the Bride of Christ, when they shall have demonstrated their faithfulness, when they shall have been proven worthy to be members of that exalted class.

There will be a crown of life in the next Age—perfect human life—as the result of obedience to the tests and trials of that time. These tests will differ in many respects from the trials and difficulties of the Church at the present time. They will be much less crucial; for then temptations to sin from without will be removed, and bodily and mental uplifting and assistance granted, which will make their trial a more favorable one. Righteousness, too, will immediately be rewarded in that Day, and sin and disobedience of every kind will be promptly punished. But now righteousness often brings suffering, reproach, pain and loss, from the human standpoint; while sin often brings present advantage, popularity and pleasure to the flesh.

The Proper View of Our Trials

There is a special love required by God of the Gospel Church—this peculiar class now called of Him. They are to have a love that is so unselfish that it will be willing, yea, glad, to lay down the earthly life in the service of God, that they may bring blessings to others. To these God has promised the **special** crown of life—immortality, His own nature. These are to be the blessers of their brethren, those of the nature formerly their own. As Isaac was the blesser of Ishmael and of the sons of Keturah, and as the first-born of Israel were the blessers of their brethren, so these will bless all the peoples of the earth, from among whom they were chosen. How thankful we should be for an honor so great!

If these favored children of the Heavenly King could always keep in mind the fact that every trial and testing, every persecution and difficulty, permitted to come upon those who have made the Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord, is designed to develop them, to prove and test their love, to demonstrate whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness, it would set all their painful experiences and temptations in a new light, and would be a great assistance to them in fighting the good fight of faith successfully. For if by these trials and tribulations the Lord is proving our love and devotion to Him, then whatever they may be, whether great or small, we should diligently use them as opportunities to demonstrate to our God the fulness of our love for Him and His cause, and as means by which we may rise day by day to greater heights of spiritual attainment, being changed into the likeness of our Master.

Thus viewed and thus met, every trial and affliction would prove a blessing, a Heavenly messenger, bearing us on wings of faith "Nearer, our God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." Then, beloved, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials, testings], knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience [patient endurance]. But let patience perfect her work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Herein we "greatly rejoice—though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [testings, provings], that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, which perisheth, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls!"—James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-8.

Truly, "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen [the things of the present order] are temporal, but the things which are not seen [the glories to come] are eternal."—2 Corinthians 4:17, 18.

"Will Ye Also Go Away?"

Thus we are assured in the infallible Word of God that those who love the Lord, and who are to receive the Kingdom, will have their love tested by trials and temptations on the way to that Kingdom. Those who do not love the Lord with **all** their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the Devil into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or the Divine providences. They will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's Plan and the Lord's way; and their schemes when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or ambition or upon an evil spirit of envy, hatred, jealousy, etc.

The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly; and like those who turned away from the Master at His First Advent, and said, "This is a hard saying," so these also go away and "walk no more with Him." But some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven away nor decoyed from Him by the arts and wiles of the Evil one and his hosts. These are such as are at heart fully the Lord's, not their own; they will follow the Lamb of God, whithersoever He may lead, because they have no will except His will. They will follow Him through all the Narrow Way of discipline and trial in this life; and by and by, as He has assured them, "They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."—Revelation 3:4.

Our Unfailing Shelter

Nor will this choice company lack in number by reason of the falling away of some. It will be of the predestinated number which God arranged to constitute the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. The Father's foreknowledge made full allowance for all who would turn back, and He knew that the requisite number would follow on, to make their calling and election sure. These have learned that the call of the world, the promptings of the flesh, and the arts of the Adversary, are all snares and traps and pitfalls to drag them down to death. They have learned the sound of the true Shepherd's voice, and cannot be enticed by the voice of strangers.

Precious children of the Lord, blessed are ye! Sheltered in the "secret place of the Most High" no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." How safe and secure are these! Though a thousand fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, yet the plague shall not come nigh them. They have "made the Most High their Habitation," and He will keep them from all harm.

"Under His Wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild;
Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me;
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

"Under His Wings! What a refuge in sorrow!
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,
Here I find comfort, and here I am blest.

"Under His Wings! Oh, what precious enfolding!
Here will I hide till life's trials are o'er;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,
Resting in Jesus, I'm safe evermore!"

As the faithful disciples of the Master in the first Harvest realized a meaning in His teachings which others of the professed children of God could not appreciate, so now, at the Second Advent of the Lord, His words have a precious significance to those who are in heart-harmony with Him which none others can realize. And we see now, as at the First Advent, that some are stumbling and going back, while others are being drawn more closely to the Lord than ever, by means of the knowledge of His Plan which He is supplying.

Feasting in the Banquet Hall

We shall not be surprised if the way become still narrower, still more difficult, and if the temptations to stumble and to fall become still more frequent. Let us then, dear brethren, be more and more on our guard against the wiles of the great Enemy of our souls, and against the deceptions of our own fallen nature. Let the perfect love of God rule in your hearts, driving out self-love and world-love, with their pride, ambition and folly. Let entire devotion to God bring into your hearts the promised fulness of joy and rest and peace. Be fruitful branches in the Vine, abiding ever in Him, responding to all the prunings of the great Husbandman with more abundant fruitage.

If beguilements come to us, let us say with the Apostles of old: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." There is life nowhere else, and we wish to go nowhere else. We are feasting in the banquet hall of our Father's House, "and His banner over us is love!" We have an abundant supply: our table is richly laden. So we eat and go on our way rejoicing. We are nearing Home. We shall soon reach the last mile-stone in our journey! Then, with a song on our lips, let us press on!

"Tempted and tried, whatever betide,
In His secret pavilion His children shall hide.
'Neath the shadowing wing of eternity's King,
His children may trust, yea, His children may sing.

"Tempted and tried, yet the Lord will abide
Thy faithful Redeemer and Keeper and Guide.
Thy shield and thy sword, thine exceeding reward;
Then enough for the servant to be as his Lord.

"Tempted and tried, the Savior who died
Hath called thee to suffer—then reign by His side.
If His cross thou wilt bear, His crown thou shalt
wear,
And forever and ever His glory shalt share."

—Z. '14:214, 215.

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7 All of the faithful ones will receive a blessing and hear the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your Lord." Nevertheless those who have been most earnest, most zealous, most devoted, and who yield a hundred fold, according to this parable, will shine the most brightly in the Kingdom, will be the nearest to the Master in His throne.—B.S.M., Vol. 6:3:3.

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Today, as never before, the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is sharp; and today, as never before, the people of God may quickly learn how to use this weapon as against every form of ignorance, superstition and Satanic opposition.—B.S.M., Vol. 6:7:2.

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There is a reason behind every Divine command and regulation. Men may make arbitrary rules and conditions without justifiable cause, but we may be sure that the great Creator has a good reason for His every act and requirement.—B.S.M., Vol. 5:12:1.

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The Lord resists the proud. Even if they become His children they are kept at a distance that they may become teachable, and avail themselves of His offer of guidance.—B.S.M., Vol. 6:2:1.

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The very **thought** of this Kingdom of righteousness, which God is about to establish through us for the blessing of Israel and all the families of the earth under the New Covenant, **should give us a realization of the holiness necessary** to be pleasing in the sight of the Lord, and should lead us to more and more sanctity of life, as it is written, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."—Z. '07:10.

Every wilful sin, no matter by whom committed, or when committed, must be answered for by stripes or by the death of the sinner.—Z. '14:154.

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Let us remember all of God's favors of the past, as well as of the present, and remember the lessons learned through our experiences, including our stumblings and failures. But let us put away every feeling of condemnation as respects the sins which God has freely forgiven, that "We may assure our hearts before him in love."—B.S.M., Vol. 2:5:3.

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The Lord may order our affairs so as to give us special opportunities and privileges in connection with his work, but he never interferes with our hearts—to be in his service against our will. We may at any time draw back from the service. "But," said St. Paul, "if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."—Heb. 10:38; Z. '09:86.

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First in the order of blessing will come the Worthies. These will be raised from the dead by the power of God—not imperfect and fallen, but perfect: **fully up to all the glorious ideals of their minds aforetime.** This will be their reward for having walked by faith and not by sight.—B.S.M. 7:12:1.

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Let us not only search the Scriptures daily and obtain intellectual appreciation of the Divine character, but let us meditate upon these eternal verities in our hearts. Let us familiarize ourselves with the points of Divine Government. Let us come more and more into sympathy with them—come into fullest harmony with our Creator and his requirements! —Z. '09:171.

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As with the Master, so with the true followers, the persecutions may be more open and more severe at some times than at others, but no radical and complete change may be expected until the kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among the nations. (Psa. 22:28.) "Then shall the righteous (the **wheat** of this Gospel age) shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43.) No longer shall they suffer the scorn, contempt and opprobrium of the world with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17), but they shall be glorified with him as joint-heirs with him in his kingdom which shall bless the whole world, including those who ignorantly persecute them now, and bringing all to a clear knowledge of the truth.—Z. '92:60.

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David waited upon the Lord many years, fully confident that in the end he should be the King of Israel, but not hastening the event in any way, simply standing ready for the responsibilities and the power of the office where the Lord should put him. What a wonderful example we have in David's course! How much Christians can learn of patient waiting for the Lord's time in all their affairs—not only waiting for the Kingdom while they pray, "Thy Kingdom come," but also waiting for the Lord's leading and providence in all their affairs, overruling them all for good! It is one of the too frequent mistakes made by Christians, that they overlook the Lord's providence and promised supervision of their interests, and attempt to do for themselves, often to their own disadvantage.—Z. '15:125.

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People usually find what they look for. Infidels who are in a wrong attitude of mind and desirous of finding fault with the Bible succeed in convincing themselves of its inconsistencies, contradictions, etc. Sometimes they succeed in deceiving others whose intentions are good, but who are lacking in spiritual discernment. We suggest that our proper attitude towards erstwhile friends is to let them alone—to allow God to deal with them. Such of them as he sees to be honest-hearted and of right spirit he will guide in judgment and lead back again into the Truth; such as he cannot approve for any part of his work, he has a perfect right to cast aside. We may not murmur, but rather be glad that our eyes are open to see the wisdom and the justice of the Divine decree, "The wages of sin is death." If, then, those who were once with us and "of us" have not been influenced by all the Lord's leadings in the past and the presentations of the present, what more can we do for them but leave them in the hand of him who is too wise to err and too just to be unkind? —Z. '10:105.

◆

We cannot see wastefulness in any of the Lord's consecrated people without feeling that, however great progress they have made in understanding the mind of the Lord in some respects, they are still deficient in this particular. An appreciation of the gift and respect for the Giver implies a carefulness and a stewardship in respect to all that comes to us from our heavenly Father—things temporal and things spiritual. According to our Lord's parables he is measuring our love and zeal in a considerable degree by our use or abuse of the talents, opportunities, blessings, temporal and spiritual, now bestowed upon us.—Z. '04:77.

◆

If our reward at our Lord's hands is to be in proportion as we shall be diligent in using this "pound," opportunity received **through our justification,** let us lay aside every weight and every besetting sin, and strive with patience to do with our might all that our hands find to do. The faithful ones seeking opportunities will find them; the less faithful, the less zealous, will find fewer, while others will pass them by, and ultimately miss the reward, and the opportunities previously **theirs through justification** will be given to those more zealous.—Z. '07:63.

◆

The Lord declares that "the path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But as a right condition of heart is necessary in order to get onto this shining path, so a wrong condition of heart would surely take us off the shining pathway and into the darkness which so generally prevails all about us.—Z. '09:41.

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Old Corn Gems

No. 100

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"Take Heed to Yourselves"

"Remember Lot's wife."—Luke 17:32.

IN CONNECTION with our dear Master's prophetic warnings respecting the trials and testings of the present day, He uttered the words of our text. The significance of these words should be comprehended by all who are walking in the light of "Present Truth." The lesson is that those who, under the special guidance of the Lord, are now fleeing for safety to the Mountain of the Lord's Kingdom, will be held to a much stricter account than are others. Lot's wife was not accused of having shared in the evil practises of the people of Sodom, but she had been instructed by the angel of the Lord to leave Sodom at once, as it was doomed.

Her fault was that of **looking back** to that which she had been commanded to leave, and which she had left. She was told to flee from the condemned city, and not to look back as she fled, but to hasten on to the mountain of safety. We may reasonably suppose that her turning and looking back toward Sodom implied a heart not fully in harmony with her deliverance, but in some degree sympathetic with what she was leaving. She at heart clung to the accursed things condemned to destruction and was loath to give them up. Therefore the Lord brought her no further. She became a monument of the folly of sympathizing with evil, and with evil doers, after God has given them up.

We believe there are some now who need to have their attention called to the antitype of this typical incident referred to by our Lord. Quite a number are disposed to sympathize and fraternize with those who have come under Divine condemnation. We are told by St. Jude that the destruction of Sodom was "set forth as an example," or type. Those who assume to be more gracious and long-suffering than the Lord, make of themselves opponents, who instead of being students of the principles of righteousness, attempt to be judges and teachers of Jehovah. The proper attitude of heart accepts God's decision as not only wiser but more just than our own. Consequently, when we see any who have enjoyed the light of Present Truth abandoned by the Lord and led into outer darkness, we are to conclude that before being thus abandoned there must have been in them "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." "He is faithful who hath promised" that "if any man will do His [the Father's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John 7:17.) Whoever, therefore, loses the doctrines of Christ after once having had them, has surely done more than get his **head** confused. His **heart** must have been separated from the Lord previously; for so long as we abide in Him, it will not be possible for any of the snares of this "evil day," this "hour of temptation," to entrap us; none shall pluck us out of the Father's hand; He is fully able to take care of us.

Sent Into Outer Darkness

Let us remember that God has promised to keep and guide the minds of those whose hearts are loyal and true to Him. We should therefore conclude that if the Lord is thrusting any one out of the light as unworthy of it, into the outer darkness of the world, if He is permitting unfaithful ones to be seduced by the great enemy, it is not our mission to follow them into the outer darkness by reading, conversation, etc. We are to remain with the Lord and those who are walking in the light. . . .

Neither are we to waste sympathy upon those who depart. If we can neither persuade them nor pull them out of the fire, we must let them go, and should turn at once and render aid to others more worthy. When the Lord has put any out of the light (Matthew 22:13, 14), we cannot hope to bring them back. Had it been proper for them to remain in the light, if they had been worthy of it, He would not have permitted them to be put out of it.

No Fellowship With "Unfruitful Works"

. . . Such are no longer to be to us brothers or sisters in Christ, but should be considered and treated as of the world—"as a heathen man or a publican." These are not to be numbered among our friends; for the friendship of such is enmity against God. We are not to receive or entertain such at our houses, nor bid them or their work God-speed in any manner. (2 John 8-11.) Some who have neglected the plain statement of God's Word on this subject have suffered spiritually for their disobedience.

Let us more and more be of one mind with the Lord. His friends must be our friends; His enemies our enemies. If we affiliate with the Lord's enemies, we shall **at least** get into a luke-warm condition towards Him and His friends; and the lukewarm, God declares He will spew out of His mouth. We should cultivate warmth of heart toward all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to our Redeemer as their Lord and Head. There must be no lukewarmness there. Whatever their peculiarities according to the flesh, we cannot be other than **brethren** to them in spirit, with all the helpfulness and sympathy which brotherhood in Christ implies. But we must not, cannot, have any fellowship with the ungodly, the sinners against light and Truth, and scorners of the grace of God. And although if they were destitute we would feed them, yet so long as they are the opponents and adversaries of the Lord's Cause and His Truth, they are our adversaries and we theirs. The Lord loves **positiveness** with harmlessness, and of us it should be true as it is prophetically written of our Lord and the true members of His Body in Psalm 139: 19-24.

This injunction of our Lord, to "remember Lot's wife," also applies particularly to the Lord's people who have heard His call of the present time to "come out" of Babylon, and have left this condemned "city." Whoever, therefore, is being led of the Lord's angels (messengers) to a place of safety ere the foretold destruction overtakes the present Order, as were Lot and his family before the destruction of Sodom, let him not look back or otherwise manifest sympathy with that which is condemned of the Lord to overthrow and destruction.

Heart Loyalty and Outward Loyalty in Next Age

In the next Age, when the world shall have been brought to a knowledge of the Truth, the opportunity will be granted them to show forth what is the real attitude of their hearts toward God. Some after coming to see the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, will still prefer sin; and God's sentence upon them will again be the sentence of death—Second Death. A certain period will be granted them to learn of the great goodness of the Lord and of their opportunity of gaining eternal life. If they do not then manifest an interest in their own salvation and an appreciation of God's goodness in Christ, and a desire to be helped up out of sin and degradation, they will receive the final wages of sin, utter and eternal destruction in the Second Death.

There will apparently be some in that time who will seem to desire assistance up to a better life, a righteous life, who will yield obedience in perhaps only an outward way to the laws of the Kingdom. These, we understand, will be permitted to live on and be gradually brought up to a condition of physical and mental perfection; they may live through to the full end of the thousand years of Christ's Reign. At the end of that time they, with all others then living, will be turned over by Christ to the Father for a final crucial testing. If these then prove that their wills have not been wholly given up to God, that they do not yet appreciate the costly provision made for their salvation, and the value of righteousness, they will be destroyed as unworthy of Divine approval and unworthy of everlasting life. If the demonstration which will then have been given them of the Wisdom, the Justice and the Love of God will not have changed their hearts to entire devotion to Him and to His glorious and righteous will, any further opportunity would be utterly useless. They will be cut off from earth as cumberers of the ground, that only the righteous, the holy, may live throughout the ages of eternity.

Of the world God will require a full consecration to do His will. It must include their entire selves, their wills, their bodies—their whole-hearted allegiance. It will not be a consecration unto sacrifice, unto death, as is now the case with the Church; but they must become wholly devoted to God and must realize and recognize that they belong to God, that they have been bought, purchased back from death, and may, if obedient, live forever. We all see how reasonable is this requirement. Adam, who was created in God's likeness, should have said, "I belong to God. He gave me my life and all I have." But he had not fully learned to trust the Wisdom and Love of his Maker. He had a perfect brain, a perfect organism; but he lacked full knowledge of the character of the Lord and of the justice of all His requirements. His incomplete knowledge, therefore, rendered him to some extent excusable in God's sight. If he had taken the stand of opposition to the Lord with clear knowledge and experience, apparently he would not have been accounted worthy of redemption. The whole world will, then, when they reach perfection, realize that they owe everything to God, and, if loyal at heart, will wish to render all to Him in glad service—to the praise of His name.

While it would have been eminently proper for the world, as with Adam, to render perfect obedience to God, even if man had never sinned and been redeemed, the fact that they **have** sinned, and yet have been redeemed through God's abounding love and mercy, and will be given another opportunity, a full individual opportunity, to gain life eternal, furnishes a double reason why they should devote themselves fully to God and His service forevermore. Those who are bought with blood—the precious blood of the Son of God, through whom they were created—who were redeemed by **such** a Sacrifice, should rejoice to bind themselves to all eternity to the God who so loved them, and should count it their most precious privilege to render homage and worship and praise forever to such a Creator and such a Redeemer.

"Not My Own, But Saved By Jesus"

The Church of Christ realize, as none others can, the mighty significance of the words, "Ye are bought with a price, and ye are not your own." Our decision has been made that we will indeed be the glad bond-servants of Him who thus loved and bought us. We have no rights left. Our all is on the altar of sacrifice with our Lord; and God has ratified our decision. We are now under the most binding of obligations. Unless our lives are laid down in harmony with our contract we can never have eternal life on any plane.

Of these who have assumed this obligation there are two classes. There is one class who will do all they have covenanted to do. These will "receive the full reward." (2 John 8.) Then there is the other class who, having made the same covenant, fail to fulfil their contract. But just as the endorser of a note is responsible, so the Lord Jesus will see to it that these finish the sacrifice which they have covenanted to make. Their lives must be yielded up. If they rebel against the enforced destruction of their flesh, they will be sinning wilfully, and will die the Second Death, from which there will be no recovery.

All the Covenantors have agreed to glorify God in their bodies, to lay them down faithfully in His service. Anything less could not be acceptable; and we should not think of rendering anything less. Let us, then, proceed with the work of sacrificing these earthly bodies, which are the Lord's—not that we should use them up in a suicidal way, without regard to the strain upon the flesh, but in a reasonable, sane manner let us daily, hourly, glorify God in our bodies, continuing our sacrifice even unto the end, whether that end be a few weeks off or a few months.—Z. '16:261-263.

◆

A very sure mark of ripeness is a loose hold of earth. Ripe fruit easily parts from the stem.—Z. '91:110.

"Cast Not Away Your Confidence"

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."—Hebrews 10:35.

WITH VERY MANY of God's people, as well as with the world's people, the ideal Christian life is one of constant peace and tranquility. They have never learned that "the peace of God which passeth all [worldly] understanding," promised to the Christian, is to rule in and keep his **heart** (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15), but does not apply to his outward life. They forget, or perhaps never learned, that our Master's words were, "In the world **ye shall have tribulation,** but in Me ye shall have **peace"** [in your hearts]. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?" "Yea, and **all** that will live godly in Christ Jesus [in this present world, or dispensation] **shall** suffer persecution." It is of a wicked class, and not of the saints, that the Prophet declared, "They are **not in trouble as other men."**—John 16:33; 15:18; Matt. 10:25; 2 Tim. 3:12; Psa. 73:5.

Only to those who have some knowledge of God's great Plan is His dealing with His people understandable and readable. The world marvels that those whom God receives into His family, as sons by redemption and adoption, should be required or even permitted to suffer afflictions. But to the well-instructed saint the Apostle says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) And this saint may now clearly discern the object and utility of present trials, afflictions and persecutions. He sees that these are in fullest accord with his high calling, his heavenly calling—to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ our Lord, **"if so be that we suffer** with Him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:17.

But why should a share in the coming glory be made dependent upon present sufferings? We answer, For two reasons:

Positive Character Necessary

(1) Severe trials and testings of our love for God and for His Truth, and of our faith in Him and in His promises, are only a wise provision on God's part, in view of the very high honor and responsibility of the great office to which He has called us. If it was proper that our Lord and Redeemer should be tested in all points as to faith and obedience before His exaltation to the excellent glory and power of the divine nature, much more so it is fitting that **we,** who were once aliens and strangers, far from God, and children of wrath even as others, should be thoroughly tested.

We are not tested as to the perfection of our earthen vessels, for God and we well know that in our fallen flesh dwelleth no perfection; but tested as to our new minds, our **consecrated wills,** whether or not these are fully consecrated to the Lord, firmly established in the love of truth, purity and righteousness in general. We are also tested to see whether we will **compromise** any of the principles of righteousness for worldly favor, selfish ambition, or for any of "the pleasures of sin for a season." Those who **love** righteousness and **hate** iniquity, who develop **positive characters,** these are the "overcomers" who shall, as members of Christ, inherit all things. The undecided, the lukewarm—neither cold nor hot—are far from having the spirit of the Kingdom class, and will surely be rejected—"spewed out."—Rev. 3:16.

Love, Not Selfishness, the Ruling Principle

(2) A share in the coming glory is dependent upon present sufferings, for the reason that the coming glories are to be bestowed only upon those who have the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of holiness. And whoever has received this Holy Spirit, or disposition, and has been transformed by the renewing of his mind, or will, so that no longer **selfishness** but **love** shall rule over his thoughts and words and deeds, that person, if in the world at all, could not avoid present suffering. His love for God, his zeal for God's service and people, his faith in God's Word and his uncompromising attitude respecting everything relating to these, would be so greatly in contrast with the prevalent spirit of doubt, selfishness and compromise that he would be thought peculiar, called an extremist and a fanatic, if not a hypocrite.

Evil surmisings, out of hearts not fully consecrated, will attribute every good deed to some selfish or evil motive, and, therefore, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My [Christ's] name's sake"; for "the world knoweth [understandeth] us not, because it knew Him not." (Luke 21:17; 1 John 3:1.) The reason for all this is evident: it is because "the god of this world hath blinded the eyes" of the vast majority of men; because the faithful, who appreciate the Truth, who have new hearts (wills) and the right spirit on these subjects, are but a "little flock."

Present Conditions Most Favorable for Overcoming

These conditions will not be changed until the testing of the "little flock" is finished. God will permit evil to be in the ascendancy until that testing, sifting, refining and polishing of the Bride of Christ is fully accomplished. . . .

Therefore, dear brethren and sisters, let us give heed to the Apostle's words, and not cast away our confidence—confidence in God, in the outworking of His great Plan, and in all who trust in the precious blood and are bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in their daily lives—meekness, patience, brotherly kindness, love.

Confidence the Basis of Christian Effort

With some of the Lord's people, however, there is a tendency to become discouraged, to think that they may have been unfaithful and thus to lose their peace of mind. In some instances, this feeling of discouragement leads to such fear and distress that the Second Death is apprehended. The Apostle seems to have in mind this condition. We are surrounded with imperfection of both judgment and conduct: and those who have a proper estimate of themselves must know that they come far short of the Divine standard and of their own vow of consecration. This knowledge should tend to make all very humble, and very generous in considering others, but not to discourage us.

St. Paul exhorts all such, saying, "Cast not away your confidence." Let such remember that the fact that they have received this Divine favor is an indication that their offering has had Divine acceptance. Faith, or confidence, in God and in the "great and precious promises" is the very basis of all Christian endeavor. Without this faith one cannot fight a good fight. In proportion as the promises are before our minds, in that proportion we have strength and courage to run the narrow way.

If a follower of the Lord has been thus discouraged or has felt that his expectations have not been realized, he should not be weary in well doing. He should go to the Lord in prayer and renew his vow of consecration. He should rise from the ashes of discouragement and lift the cross with renewed zeal. He should endeavor to walk on a higher plane than ever. If he lose confidence, lose faith, he will easily be overcome by the Adversary.

The very ones whom God will approve are those who walk by faith. The rewards are for those who hold the faith even unto death. We must beware of everything that tends to weaken or destroy our faith. The Lord deals graciously and generously with us. He will do for us whatever is right. Knowing this we can have confidence in God, even though the decision of Divine Justice should bar us out of Divine favor. Those whose hearts are right are submissive to the Divine will. The Lord wants us to have a faith that will continue in sorrow and in sunshine; that will trust where it cannot see, that will continue under all the leadings of Divine providence.

Communion With Christ in Suffering

In Hebrews 10:32-39 the Apostle clearly shows that there are two ways of enduring the afflictions of Christ: (1) to be made a gazing-stock both by afflictions and reproaches, and (2) by avowing our sympathy for the reproached ones and thus sharing their reproaches and afflictions. For if one member suffer, all the members of the Body of Christ suffer with it.

"Call to remembrance the former days," and note that your afflictions and trials came principally after you had been illuminated with the light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord; and that they have increased as the light of Present Truth has increased with you. It is not difficult to discern the reason for this. The great Adversary is not interested in disturbing those who are "asleep in Zion"; but he is ever on the alert to mislead and entangle those who are awake. And the more active we become in the service of the Lord and the Truth, and, consequently, the more actively opposed to Satan and error, the more he will fight against us. And the more faithfully and vigorously we fight the good fight, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we shall have of the Master's approval now, and the greater will be our reward in the Kingdom.

Increasing Severity of Trials

No doubt there are many and more severe trials just before us. From God's standpoint, having been blest with greater light, we should be able to endure greater trials and afflictions. From Satan's standpoint we, as a Gideon's band, armed with the Truth, are more injurious to his cause than all others combined. The only wonder to us is that he has not assailed us still more fiercely in the past. Perhaps he was hindered; perhaps he will be granted yet more liberty to buffet us. Such is our expectation, based upon the direct statements and the types of Scripture.

But such reflections should bring us no sadness, no fear; for He that is on our part is more than all that be against us. (1 John 4:4; Rom. 8:31.) His promises, as well as His providences, are walls of salvation and protection on every hand. What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation? No! it shall but cause us to draw closer to Him; and under His protecting care we shall rest. His grace is sufficient for us. His strength is made manifest in our weakness. When we feel weak in ourselves, then we are strong in Him. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

"Watchman, what of the night?" "The morning cometh, and also the night."—Isa. 21:11, 12; Z. '12: 275, 276.

Prayer the Vital Breath of the New Creature

"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18:1.

JESUS spoke a parable, of which the gist, or import is, "That men ought always to pray and not to faint." That parable tells how even an unjust judge would, because of importunity, heed an appeal for justice and would finally yield to its demands, although he cared little for the principle itself. In the parable the woman was importunate in her petitions for justice against those who were doing her injury. The Lord seems to inculcate just such importunity in prayer, and gives this as an illustration of how His people should continue in their prayers; not that they should pray all the time, in the sense of never getting off their knees, or of never doing anything except to pray, but that they should continue in their prayers and not grow faint or disheartened.

In order to pray properly, the child of God should know what he may pray for. Otherwise he might be asking for the wrong things, such as God would never be pleased to give him. How may we know what things are proper to pray for? The Lord gives us an intimation along this line, of what is proper. He says, If earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, how much more is the Heavenly Father pleased to give good gifts to His children. The things which earthly fathers give to their children are **earthly** things. The things that the Heavenly Father is pleased to give to His children are **Heavenly** things. The world of mankind are not permitted to call God their Father. He disowns them as children. There is only one way to come back into relationship with God, and that is the way that Jesus opened up by His death. . . .

The Motive An Important Consideration

All who have come into the Covenant of Sacrifice with Christ may realize that they have the privilege of prayer. What may they pray for? They may not pray with definiteness for earthly things, as the Heavenly Father would not answer any petitions that would not be for the good of His children. St. James speaks of some who offer improper petitions. He says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."—James 4:3.

The word **lusts** here signifies **desires.** We are not to ask to gratify fleshly desires. For instance, suppose we should pray to the Heavenly Father to send us a million dollars, telling Him that we knew what to do with the money, and how to use it in His work. The Lord probably would not give it—for we would probably be asking amiss. But it might be that we would think that we were asking wisely. Whenever we ask anything from the Lord, we should scrutinize our motives to see if there is any personality connected with the matter. In our own case we should ask ourselves: Do we want that million dollars in order that we may shine in the use of it? If so, such a prayer would be a grossly improper prayer. We might offer such a prayer at the beginning of our Christian experience, and the Father would not chide us for it. We would excuse a child for doing what we would not excuse in one of adult years.

In respect to this matter of prayer our Lord gives us a cue. It is this: "If ye abide in Me and My Words abide in you, ye may **ask what ye will,** and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) How broad a statement this is! It might seem at first as though we might ask for **anything.** But it has very particular limitations. . . .

"If My Word abide in you." For God's Word to **abide** in us implies that we have a **knowledge** of God's Word. This necessitates the studying of the Word of God, that we may know what to pray for. We should not hasten to offer petitions, and make a great mistake, and then say, I have made a mistake, and have asked for the wrong things. We should consider what the Word of God teaches on this subject, and if any one has become well acquainted with the Word of God, he should know whether or not he has met the conditions which will sanctify his prayer. It is only after he has come to this position that he may continue to make his request, nothing doubting. But very likely he will then find that he has not a very large list of petitions that he can present. What are some of the things we may ask for?

Some Things for Which to Pray

One of the things for which we may pray is that God's Kingdom may come. We may go continually to the Throne of Grace, then, appreciating the fact that God has said that He purposes to have a Kingdom here on earth, and nothing doubting, we are to pray for that Kingdom. And as we pray, we are strengthening our faith more and more. What else may we pray for? We may also pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." But is not this something for the flesh? This is a necessity, and the Lord has warranted us in praying for our necessities. We are to use our judgment the best we may; yet we are not to trust to our own efforts alone, but to the Lord's supervising care. If, therefore, the temporal supply be scant, we are to learn the lesson of frugality and care of what we have.

We should learn very early in life not to be wasteful. When Jesus fed the multitude with the loaves and fishes, and then instructed His disciples to take up the remainder of these in their baskets, He illustrated His economy. We are to eat with thankfulness what we have, if it is merely bread and water, or potatoes and salt. There is nothing to indicate that we are to ask for pie or cake or ice-cream, but for the necessities. If in God's providence He furnishes the necessities and withholds the luxuries, then we are to be satisfied, to be **thankful.** But we are to pray and not to be fearful.

What if we do not get anything, **tomorrow?** Did you waste anything today? Did you eat too much today—twice as much as you had need for? If so, the Lord will probably teach you some lesson, and it will be for your good as a New Creature. But if you have used wisdom and economy, He will provide the things needful. As the Prophet says, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

We may pray for deliverance from the Evil One. This should lead us to see that **there is** an Evil One, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to resist his attacks successfully. We need the Lord's help at all times, and we need to pray continually and not to faint.

We may pray for the forgiveness of our trespasses. What the Lord indicates in His model prayer is the forgiveness of our **daily** trespasses—"day by day." And these trespasses are the result of our fleshly imperfections. Our trespasses of the flesh today should be a great deal less than similar trespasses with us ten years ago or five years or even one year ago.

It is best not to use any set form of words in prayer, but merely to think in advance what you desire of the Spirit—more faith, more patience, more meekness, more love. Of course, we shall want to express thanks for Divine care and to request a continuance of the same. With such prayers, however simple, the Heavenly Father is pleased. The prayers recorded in the Bible are generally not lengthy. God accepts as our prayers all the good thoughts and sentiments of our minds, as well as those expressed by our tongues.

Other statements of our Lord and also of the Apostles seem to imply that we should not grow faint-hearted. After we have prayed for a certain thing, we should continue to keep it before our mind, and not conclude that because the prayer was not answered quickly God would never answer it. This would seem to apply to particular, individual things. Our text seems to include the thought that we should have in mind the advantages of prayer in all the affairs of life, coming repeatedly to the Throne of Grace to obtain the necessary aid.

The Philosophy of Prayer

Will God forget us if we do not ask Him for things, and neglect to do the part of a Father? The answer of the Scriptures is, that this is not so. God has made abundant provision for His children. But we are so constituted that reverence for God and desire for prayer are among the highest qualities of our nature. The organs of veneration and spirituality lie at the top of our head. And those who are not enjoying the exercise of these highest qualities are not getting the proper blessing out of life. Instead of living in the parlor of their brains, so to speak, some people live in the basement. Our true enjoyment comes from the exercise of the highest faculties of the head. Here we can commune with God respecting the highest things, the noblest things, the best things.

The natural tendency of some is toward the baser qualities of the human mind, rather than the higher ones; that of others is toward the nobler sentiments. But all are imperfect. Therefore when any have turned from sin and come into the School of Christ, they are instructed to pray, because this will enable them to get the best results from their own natural combination of faculties. By coming to the Lord with regularity in prayer they are enlisting the best qualities of their own minds. Thus the New Creature is using the highest faculties of the old nature to wean the old creature from the natural habits which he had cultivated through weaknesses of the flesh.

Blight Follows Neglect of Prayer

There is a great blessing that comes from prayer! We see that if prayer be neglected, a certain amount of blight comes in; whereas if the New Creature persists in coming to the Lord in prayer, he thus uses the higher organs of the mind. He brings out the highest qualities, which will make for Righteousness and Truth, and for the growth of the New Creature. And the New Creature, making use of the higher organs of the brain, makes progress in character-structure and in the Lord's' service.

Prayer is the vital breath of the New Creature. We cannot control, nor get the best out of our old bodies except we conform to our Lord's instruction to pray. If prayer was appropriate for our Lord, who was perfect, if He needed to go often to the Father in prayer, even so it is necessary for us to go to the Lord in prayer that we may be more and more transformed by the renewing of our minds. This does not mean that we should be always on our knees, but that we should go with regularity; if possible at least every night and morning.

Some may prefer to stand when they pray, and some to kneel; some to have their eyes open, others to have them closed. In all this the Lord leaves us free to exercise our own judgment. But some formal approach to the Lord every day should be observed. Not only should we have special seasons of prayer, but we should have the spirit of prayer, which should be with us in all life's affairs. As we are going about the duties of life, we should think, Now I am looking for the Lord's will and way. What shall I do about this matter? And, not stopping to pray again, we think as to what would be the Lord's will. Thus we shall have the Lord's blessing and guidance on that day in everything that is good.

Some persons of active mind have the tendency to make light of Divine guidance and to say, I know what to do. Nobody need tell me—neither the Lord nor anybody else. Such are likely to have this tendency grow on them, and to be unlikely to seek any special counsel.

But the child of God should feel that it is a privilege to have the Lord's approval of every thought, every act and every word. What we do is God's work, not ours. And because it was done a certain way today, does not mean that it would necessarily be done so always. There are certain things that are as fixed as the hills, and others that are not. So with our experiences. The Lord may give us one experience today, and another tomorrow. Today He may be leading us by the still waters and in green pastures; tomorrow the pathway may be thorny and through rough places. Thus day by day we grow in knowledge and grow in love, and we should be ready for whatever experiences may come to us:

> "Content whatever lot I see,
> Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

—Z. '13:277-279.

Who Is Worthy?

IN THE VISIONS of the Apocalypse we read of a wonderful scroll in the right hand of the great King who sits upon the throne of universal dominion. This scroll is a forceful representation of the divine plan, originally existing only in the mind of God, and which could not be made known to men until some one was found worthy to open the seals and display it to view. But "no one in heaven nor in earth was able to open the scroll, neither to look thereon," until one came whom the Revelator describes as "The Lion [the strong one] of the tribe of Judah, the root of David," of whom the testimony is given—"Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred and people and nation: and hast made them unto our God a kingdom and priesthood: and they shall reign on the earth."—Rev. 5:1-5, 9, 10.

Excepting the bare promise (written on the outside of the scroll—verse 1) of salvation through the Seed of the woman, nothing could be known of the wonderful scheme for human restitution until the Son of God, having left the glory of the spiritual nature, took our nature and by the sacrifice of himself redeemed us from death. Then, having his righteousness imputed to us by faith, we are counted worthy to look upon the scroll as he opens the seals one after another.

Great was the favor bestowed upon the Strong One of the tribe of Judah, in being permitted to open the seals—to carry out and make manifest the grand designs of infinite love—and great is the privilege of those who are permitted to look thereon as the seals are opened. It is not our purpose here, however, to treat of the peculiar symbols relating to the opening of the seals, but rather of what constitutes worthiness in us to look thereon, and what favor of God to us is implied in this privilege of looking.

The knowledge of God's purposes is due only to those able and anxious to co-operate with him in their development: for God does not display his plans to satisfy mere idle curiosity. First, then, if we would comprehend what is revealed within the scroll we must have faith in what is written on the outside—the promised redemption through the precious blood of Christ—and must be sincerely desirous of knowing the details of God's plan in order to an earnest co-operation with it. In other words, there must be the earnest inquiry arising from a heart grateful for the promise of life through the Redeemer—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such, and such only, are worthy to know, and such only ever come to see, in the sense of understanding and appreciating, the deep things of God written within the scroll. Such are the called according to the divine purpose, to be educated in and to serve the truth. Such are the righteous for whom the light (truth) is sown. Such was our Lord's attitude when he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:7.) He was meek and lowly of heart and ever ready to render implicit obedience to the will of God; and it is to those who are similarly meek that he was sent to preach the good tidings (Isa. 61:1)—to open the scroll. "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way." (Psa. 25:9.) If any man have this evidence of worthiness—this acquaintance with the truth—let him rejoice in his privilege and by his works manifest his continued worthiness.

This worthiness is inquired for not only at the beginning, but all along the path of light. If we are not found worthy by the various tests applied from time to time, we cannot proceed in the path of light; and unless the unfaithful ones arouse themselves to greater diligence and watchfulness, the light that already is in them will become darkness. And how great, how intense must be the darkness of one cast out of light! (Matt. 6:23.) To find the glorious hope that once inspired our hearts slipping away and the truth whereon we built that hope beginning to seem like an old song or an idle tale, or as relics of the past to be displaced at any time by any plausible subterfuge of error which our wily adversary may be pleased to palm off as advanced divine truth, are indications that should arouse any one who discovers them to a realization of the fact that he is going into darkness—a darkness that will only become the more intense as he slips and slides along the backward track.

All along the way, as we have said, we will find tests applied to prove our worthiness to proceed from knowledge to knowledge and from grace to grace. Who is worthy?—worthy to receive the truth, worthy to continue in the truth, worthy to suffer and to endure hardness as a good soldier for the truth, and finally to be exalted to power and great glory when truth and righteousness shall be exalted in the earth and their glorious triumph begun?

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23.) At the very beginning of our course we each found the cross confronting us, and had we not taken it up we would not have been counted worthy even to look with intelligent appreciation into the precious truths of God's plan. And as we advance from step to step and find the truth increasingly precious—sweeter than honey from the honey comb—we have these additional evidences of continued worthiness and should greatly rejoice in them as such. Our possession of these truths has thus far proved us meek enough to discard the popular theology of the nominal church and be counted as heretics, turncoats, fanatics, cranks, or whatever our former friends are, in their ignorance, now pleased to term us. And it has proved us meek enough to bear willingly this reproach for the great joy of thus realizing the Lord's approval, and of seeing by faith the great blessings in store for us if faithful unto the end.

But "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" for sudden and sharp will be many of the tests applied to prove our continued faithfulness. The world, the flesh and the devil all conspire to allure, ensnare and overcome us. The world will present its allurements through friends or wife or husband or children. They will try to encroach upon the clearly defined line which you have drawn between yourself and the world. Then the flesh will grow weary in fighting the good fight of faith, weary of the reproaches of the world, weary of the alienation of former friends and weary of the self-denying, sacrificing and daily cross-bearing life. Then if you turn aside for a moment to ponder on these things the devil will quickly see his opportunity and will cunningly devise some trial specially suited to your peculiar condition of mind, and a crisis comes in your experience, the result of which will prove the exact strength of your devotion to God and his truth. These tests God permits and even desires to have come upon us, in order that we may be thoroughly tried and proved either worthy or unworthy of the great reward he has in keeping for those who remain faithful unto death.

The Lord is seeking his precious jewels. Many of them are indeed diamonds in the rough. The real diamond is a noble, loyal, faithful character, devoted and uncompromising in its allegiance to God. Sometimes the circumstances of life have deprived such of education or culture and have left them only sufficient means for the barest necessities of life. But no matter, God's eye is on them: character is what he is looking for, and in due time, when that character is sufficiently developed, confirmed, tested and proved worthy of exaltation, he can and will add to it all the glories of knowledge and wisdom and grace and beauty. But first he will subject it to all the necessary tests. If it is a true diamond it will receive and it will also transmit to others the light of divine truth. Nothing so gloriously reflects the light as the diamond; and nothing so gloriously reflects the truth as the worthy character of the true and faithful saint.

Another way of testing a diamond is to put it under pressure. If it is a real diamond it will stand the pressure, for the diamond is the hardest substance known; but if it is not a real diamond it will go to pieces and thus prove itself spurious. So God allows us to come under the constant pressure of years of toil and care and self-sacrifice to see how we will endure; and blessed is that diamond-proved character that endures to the end.—Jas. 1:12; Matt. 10:22.

Sometimes the tests come in the way of trials of faith, and we are called upon to prove ourselves whether we be in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5) when some subtle errors are presented to us as advanced truth. But if we know the voice of the "Good Shepherd" we will not be easily beguiled. We remember the inspired counsel, "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20); and to the law and the testimony we go, and, relying implicitly upon this as the infallible teaching of the Spirit of God, we are enabled to arrive at definite, clear and positive doctrine. We are not left in doubt as to what is truth, but are enabled to give a solid Scriptural reason for the hope that is in us, on which hope we dare implicitly to rest our faith, and with humble boldness to successfully withstand the assaults of error. But oh, how dead to selfish ambition, how fully devoted to the will of God such must be!

Let us, dearly beloved, as we realize that thus far God has counted us worthy to look upon the scroll of his plan which has been unsealed for us by our blessed Lord Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, prove our worthiness to continue to look therein and to read the wondrous things of his law, by faithful obedience and loyalty to it in all things. Let us not undervalue our great privilege in being counted worthy to suffer some reproach and some hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake; and also in being counted worthy to have some part in the blessed ministry of reflecting the light of divine truth; let us prove ourselves jewels of rarest value, diamonds indeed, heartily receiving and beautifully transmitting the light of truth, and faithfully enduring the severest pressure that God may permit to come upon us; for, if faithful in these small things we shall in due time be counted worthy also to reign with Christ in power and great glory. Let us not be like some who have only a little good earth on the surface of their hearts while the heart is really hard and stony. Let the good seed of divine truth sink down and take deep root, and then let it branch out in the light and bear its abundant fruitage to the Master's glory. So shall we be accounted worthy to see the King in his beauty and to live and reign with him as his beloved bride and joint heir. And when to the "worthy Lamb that was slain" the voices of the multitudes ascribe blessing and honor and glory and power, they will also exclaim, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."—Rev. 5:13; 19:7; Z. '02:331-333.

Personal Responsibility

Romans 14:10-21.

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is ensnared or made weak."—Rom. 14:21.

IN THIS lesson the Apostle brings forcibly to our attention the fact that amongst those who have accepted Christ as their Savior, trusting in his precious blood and consecrating themselves to him, there should be permitted the greatest liberty of conscience. We need, however, to discriminate between liberty in the matter of **conscience,** and liberty in the matter of **faith.** These two very different things are very frequently confounded; and the Apostle's words in this lesson are made an excuse for fellowshipping **any** faith or **no** faith. On the contrary, the Apostle very emphatically shows elsewhere, in this very same epistle, and in all his writings, that matters of faith and of divine instruction are not matters of conscience at all; and our consciences (otherwise our judgments) are not to determine in reference to what we shall believe, in the sense of deciding our faith: on that subject the entire Church of God stands upon one platform; and whoever does not stand upon that platform is not related to the Church of God in any sense or particular. . . .

We are not to excuse differences on fundamental doctrine, by calling them matters of conscience, for conscience has nothing to do with the matter. These are faith differences. He who has the faith rightly based is justified, and he who has not the properly based faith is unjustified and is yet in his sins.

Neither can this question of conscience excuse from obedience to any of the matters which are clearly and distinctly taught by the Lord and his apostles, by word and example. For instance, our Lord enjoined love of the brethren: it is not the province, therefore, of any man's conscience to judge that in his case love of the brethren is unnecessary. Again, Christ and the apostles enjoined upon the Church that we should not only symbolically eat his flesh (appropriate the merit of his sacrifice) and drink his blood (share his death—be dead with him), but our Lord provided an outward symbol of this to be commemorated annually and said, "Do **this**, in remembrance of me." And the apostles set us the example of doing **this** on its anniversary. It is not, therefore, a matter of conscience, but a matter of obedience, whether we do it or do it not. Similarly, our Lord declared the immersion (burial) of his will into the Father's will and the real baptism into death, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." A few days after this, it was accomplished, "finished," at Calvary; but in addition to this, the real baptism, our Lord at the beginning of his consecration symbolized it in a water immersion at the hands of John, saying, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." —Matt. 3:15.

The apostles also enjoined this, explaining that water baptism was "**not** the putting away of the filth of the flesh," but simply "the answer [outward declaration] of a good conscience toward God:" they instructed (Rom. 6:2-6) that the real baptism is a baptism or burial of the will into the will of Christ. . . . It is not a matter for any man's conscience to decide whether or not he will obey the voice of the Lord and of the apostles: It is merely a question of **knowledge** and of **obedience**, both as respects the real baptism of the will, and also respecting the outward, symbolic baptism in water. . . .

In the lesson before us the Apostle points out that those who have become God's people by obedient faith and consecration (so long as they maintain that **faith and consecration**) are amenable only to God with respect to their views of his will on minor matters respecting which he has not given positive instructions. It is to him that each one is responsible. If really and truly they bow their knee to him, and if really and truly their tongues confess to him, no human being has either the right or the ability to intervene and to judge of their consciences, in respect to feasts or fasts, new moons or holy days, eating meat or abstaining from meat—none of which things are regulated under the Grace Covenant. Others have the right to commend or advise on these subjects, but have not the right to command or condemn. The Apostle urges that since each one of us must give an account of himself to God as a consecrated member of the body of Christ, according to his own conscience or judgment of the Lord's will therefore, each is to remember that God is the Judge of all; and instead of condemning one another for conscientious differences with reference to feasts and fasts, etc., each should rather make sure that from his own life he remove everything that would be calculated to mislead or to stumble his brother by a violation of his conscience.

The important point of discussion toward which the Apostle's argument was directed was the eating of meat which had previously been offered to idols —and it would appear that nearly all the meat sold in the market places in heathen countries was so offered. Some of the brethren insisted that therefore they were practically deprived of eating meat at a neighbor's house or at a restaurant, and felt obliged to inquire as would a Jew. And these were inclined to look with discredit upon those who did eat such meat. The Apostle shows that his mind took the view, that since the idol was nothing, the meat could not have been injured in any manner. Nevertheless, while he would like to have seen all the brethren fully informed on the subject, he discouraged any attempt on the part of others to shame them into violating their consciences; and he points out to those who are strong, and who could see the matter clearly, that instead of ridiculing the weaker brethren, they should be glad to note their conscientiousness and to help them, for by ridicule and getting them to violate their conscience they might start them in a downward course which would lead to their destruction. Instead of forcing the weaker brother to use a liberty which would violate his conscience, the stronger brother, if he asked the weaker to eat at his table, should be careful to provide meat that had not been offered to idols, that the weaker brother might not be tempted to violate his conscience. Why should we be so bent on using our liberty and forcing it on others when we see that it might lead to the injury of brothers for whom Christ died? Christ left the glory with the Father and humbled himself to man's condition, and even to death, giving up life itself for our fallen race: can we, therefore, if we have our Master's spirit, do less than sacrifice some of our rights and liberties in the interest of the weaker brethren? And by so doing your good, your liberty, your right view of the matter, would not be evil spoken of.

We are indeed the Kingdom of God in embryo, and as such we are not in bondage, but realize the liberty which the poor world, ignorant of the great Emancipator, Christ, and the great emancipation which he has wrought for those who receive him, does not comprehend. But, urges the Apostle, let us remember, dear brethren, that the advantage of being members of this embryo Kingdom is not merely these **liberties**, which release us from the Mosaic restrictions with reference to what we will eat and to what we will drink, but it means far more, even in the present life. The most valuable blessings which we have as members of this embryo Kingdom are—righteousness (justification through Christ) and its resulting blessings of peace and joy in the holy spirit. Let us not, therefore, think that in giving up some of our liberties we would be losing the blessings and favors of the gospel: quite the contrary, we have all the best things left to us, and may the more richly enjoy them by copying our Master's self denial in **sacrificing** these little liberties.

And he that in these things (verse 18) surrenders his own rights and liberties, in his endeavor to serve Christ, serving some of the humble members of his body, is both acceptable with God and approved of men: not only will fellow men appreciate such little sacrifices, on their behalf, but God also will appreciate them. Therefore, instead of contending about our rights and privileges and battling to have these, let us rather follow in the way that leads to peace and the things whereby we may become helps one to another as members of the Lord's body. Do not permit a question respecting your food, drink or clothing to destroy the work of God—either the work of the development of his grace in your own heart, or by breaking down the conscience of a weaker brother, destroy the work which grace has begun in him. Being free from the Mosaic law we understand that all kinds of food are permissible, and none to be regarded as unclean, but if any one thinks that certain food is unclean (forbidden by God's command) it would be a sin for him to eat it, because he thus would violate his conscience.

Finally, brethren, the Apostle urges, it would be a good rule to follow, to refrain from either the eating of meat or the drinking of wine, or any other liberty whose exercise would likely do injury to another, either temporarily or permanently.—Z. '97: 171, 172.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Our Love for God and for the Lord Jesus will be tested in the manner of our obeying the will of God—whether we do this in a joyful manner or not. In proportion as we have and maintain our love for the Lord, in that proportion will our joy increase in the performance of His will. We can see how many have fallen under this test.—Z. '17: 262.

◇

We should not waste our energies by poor attempts to use a talent not possessed. Rather, having found that capacity in which we can do most effectual service for the Truth, let us spend our energies along that line with diligence and carefulness. "Having, then, gifts differing," let us use them with diligence, patience, simplicity and cheerfulness, contented to be very humble in the estimation of others in order that our humble talents may increase the more to the Master's glory and in respect to our Heavenly interests.—Z. '16: 317.

◇

To those who have made a consecration the thought would be, You have entered into a Covenant with God to follow Jesus. You have given up your own human will. Remember that this includes your mortal body. Continue the work of presenting your body—of dying daily. Keep before your mind this Covenant of Sacrifice; for it is not yet fulfilled. The mere promise to fulfil a covenant is not fulfilling it.—Z. '14: 87.

◇

We are to take the standpoint of leaving to the Lord the management of his own affairs, the interests of his cause in general. He is abundantly able to attend to the whole matter. We are to see to it that our hearts are fully submissive, and that our heads, our wills, are under the Headship, Leadership of the Lord; that his will is done in us, and that our sacrifices are not made to be seen of men, but are made as unto God; thus we shall have his approval in that day. To such he says he will be glad to give acknowledgment, and to confess them before the Father and his holy angels.—Z. '10: 269.

◇

Unquestionably, the majority of the Church troubles (and society and family troubles as well) spring not from a desire to wrong, nor even from a wrong unintentionally committed, but from misunderstandings and, at least, partial misinterpretations of intentions or motives. The tongue is the general mischief-maker; and it is part of the spirit of a sound mind, therefore, to set a guard upon the lips as well as upon the heart, from which proceed the ungenerous sentiments which, the lips expressing, set fire to evil passions and often injure many. —F. 291.

◇

What ever the Heavenly Father has authorized or permitted, not one of His obedient children should for a moment think of resisting or overturning.—Z. '14: 235.

◇

Let the Marthas serve the Lord in one way, and the Marys pour out their most precious spikenard perfume, assured that neither service will be forgotten; for both are told and have been told for eighteen centuries, as memorials to their praise, testimonies of their love, which the Lord appreciated and accepted, however they were viewed by others. —Z. '00: 378.

◇

God has plenty; He needs nothing from us; the giving of a sacrifice on our part would be the doing of something that would neither advantage the Lord nor increase His wealth. It would merely be an expression on our part of our appreciation of His goodness and our desire to show this appreciation. —Z. '17: 35.

◇

If we had the power to shield any of our worldly friends from the time of trouble, we believe that by so shielding them we would be doing them a real injury instead of good.—Z. '16: 71.

DATE OF MEMORIAL SUPPER

At the General Convention, held recently in Victoria, B.C., the brethren assembled accepted the date March 30th after 6 p.m. as being the proper time on which to celebrate the Memorial Supper of our Lord this year. No doubt, the Standfast brethren everywhere will make all arrangements necessary to enable them to partake of what will undoubtedly prove to be one of the last Memorial Suppers at which members of the Little Flock class will attend on this side the vail.

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Another Day With Thee

"Another day before me!
Dear Master, let it be.
In working or in waiting,
Another day with Thee;

"Another day of leaning
On Thy beloved breast,
Of ever-deepening trustfulness,
Of quiet, happy rest:

"Another day of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace,
Another day of gladness
In the shining of Thy face.

"Another day of progress,
Another day of praise,
Another day of proving
Thy love in all Thy ways.

"Another day is dawning—
Dear Master, may it be,
On earth, or else in Heaven,
Another day for Thee!"—Z. '17:154.

Beyond the Shadows

Further on—beyond the shadows
Falling darkly o'er my way,
There is home, and rest and shelter,
Where no storms can e'er dismay.

Though the way be rough and narrow,
And a cross must needs be borne,
Further on—the night is waning
Soon will dawn the welcome morn.

Meekly to His will submitting,
In His love secure and strong,
Jesus whispers, "Bide the shadows,
It is better further on."

Further on—O blest assurance!
How it thrills my raptured heart,
Just to know that I shall see Him
When the shadows all depart.

Let me still be strong and patient,
Trusting where I cannot trace,
Further on—beyond all darkness
Faith can see God's smiling face.

Only waiting, ever praying,
Let my heart be filled with song.
Sweet the promise Jesus gives me,
"It is better further on."—Z. '05:263.

The Refiner's Fire

He sat by a fire of seven-fold heat
As He watched the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching gaze,
As He heated it more and more.

He knew He had ore that could stand the test,
And He wanted the finest gold,
To mould as a crown for the King to wear,
Set with gems of a price untold.

So He laid our gold on the burning fire,
Tho' we fain would have said Him, "Nay";
And He watched the dross that we had not seen
As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright,
But our eyes were so dim with tears,
We saw but the fire—not the Master's hand—
And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
As it mirrored a Form above,
That bent o'er the fire, unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.

Can we think that it pleases His loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah, no! but He saw thro' the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And His gold did not suffer a whit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure!—Z. '13:189.

In Thee I Trust

Only for thee, Lord, would I live, while here below;
It is my great delight, thy love to show;
Use me, then, first as thou seest best—
Not mine to choose, but mine to trust and rest.

Only to thee would I resign my will, 'tis all
I have to give, and Lord, it seems so small
A thing to offer unto thee,
Who didst lay down thy life for me.

Only to thee, my Lord, I'd come when trials press,
Assured that thou alone canst comfort best;
My deepest griefs, I need not to thee tell,
Thou understandest all, dear Lord, so well!

'Tis only thou canst send the peace which soothes
my pain,
That bids my weeping cease, and sunshine follow
rain,
My every fear remove and doubt dispel,—
I rest on thee, and know that all is well.—Z. '11:90.

J. A. Malcan

Old Corn Gems

No. 101

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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The Sacrificial Loaf and Cup

A broken loaf—a cup of crimson wine,
On snowy table laid,
Ah! emblems these of wondrous sacrifice—
The costly price He paid!
That precious body, broken once for me,
That precious blood once spilt—
For me, that I through Him might be made free,
Aye, free—from death and guilt!

And has this broken loaf, this crimson wine,
A further meaning still?
Ah, yes! thro' grace I am a part of Him,
His sufferings to fulfil.
My body to be broken with my Lord,
My blood with His be shed,
And as I die with Him, with Him I live,
My ever glorious Head!

O wondrous mystery! O glorious thought!
Thro' death with Him I rise!
Suffering with Him, I with Him too shall reign,
Triumphant in the skies!
Yet on this night—before this snowy board,
Spread with this bread and wine,
Canst thou say truly, O my soul, my soul,
"These promises are mine"?

Is all thy will completely blent with His,
Whate'er may be that will?
Art willing to be crushed, that thy life's wine
May thus flow out to fill
And bless and nourish other lives than thine,
That they may bud and flower?
Art glad and thankful that thy broken life
Shall have vicarious power?

And canst thou to His precious will say "Yes,"
E'en tho' with tear-dimmed eyes
And quivering lips of pain and throbbing heart?
And when His love denies
What thy poor heart had thought its very own,
And brings to thee instead
Experiences thou canst not understand—
A pathway hard to tread—

Wilt thou still say "Amen," and trust Him still,
And wait in patient love,
Till He shall say, "It is enough, My child,
Come to thy Home above"?
And when His Truth is ridiculed and scorned,
And His dear "Servant," like his blessed Lord,
Is spat upon, and crowned with thorns, dost thou
REJOICE yet more to own His Word?

"Yes, yes!" my glad heart answers, "I REJOICE
This privilege sweet to own!
And I will kiss my cross, and wait Thy time,
Dear Lord, to share Thy Throne."
Then, oh my soul, these emblems are for thee—
This broken loaf, this wine—
And thou may'st claim His precious promises,
For they are truly thine.

The hour is late—the end is drawing nigh—
And as we gather here,
Brethren beloved, to share this holy feast,
We know the time is near
When all His loved ones shall be gathered Home,
Our tears all wiped away,
And all the shadows that oppress us here
Shall yield to perfect day.
Then with rejoicing let us now partake,
Our journey's almost o'er;
The light is breaking o'er the Heavenly hills!
Our King is at the door!—Z. '13: 73.

The Memorial, March 30th

AFTER six o'clock on Friday evening, March 30th, readers of this journal will gather as ecclesias of Christ to memorialize his death with "unleavened bread" and "fruit of the vine" as emblems of his broken body and shed blood. The largest of these assemblies will not be a great multitude— . . . for, as the Master said, "Wherever two or three are met in my name, there am I in their midst."—Matt. 18: 20.

We urge that none neglect this annual privilege, for any reason. There is a special blessing in its observance. If you incline to feel discouraged, go partake of the broken loaf, asking the Lord for a fresh realization of your justification, and a fresh appreciation of your consecration to be broken (sacrificed) with him, as reckoned members of the one loaf—his Church, his Body. Then as you taste of "this cup" remember that it speaks of our Lord's sufferings on our behalf—his tasting death for every man. Remember, also, that this is "our high calling"—"to suffer with him that we may also reign with him." This is the significance of his words, "drink ye all of it." And, as the Apostle declares, it is the com[mon]union in his sufferings.—1 Cor. 10:16.

Let us not forget that the Memorial is meaningless or worse unless thus accepted and appreciated. But let nothing hinder us—neither sins, nor coldness, nor feelings of unworthiness. Go to the Lord and make a clean breast of all your shortcomings. Go to your brethren or any whom you have wronged—make full acknowledgment, whether they acknowledge faults toward you or not. Get yourself right with your Lord and so far as possible with every man, and then eat—yea, feast upon the rich provision the Lord has made for all who accept, now or in a later "due time."

Such a heart-searching and cleansing, we remember, was shown in the Passover type given to the Jews. Before they gathered to eat their Passover-lamb they searched everywhere throughout their habitations for anything containing leaven or putrefaction, bones, crusts, everything. These all were burned—destroyed. So must we fulfil the antitype and "put away the old leaven" of anger, malice, hatred, strife.—1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

But remember that this kind of leaven of sin cannot be thoroughly put away unless it be burned; and only love can burn it out—heavenly love, the love of God. If we have that love shed abroad in our hearts it will consume everything of the opposite character—jealousy, hatred, evil speaking, etc. Put off all these, urges the Apostle, and put on Christ and be filled with his Spirit. Do not be discouraged. True, for the time you ought to be further along, nearer to perfect love. But learn the lesson and start again with fresh resolutions and increased appreciation of the fact that of yourself, without the Master's aid, you could never gain the prize. He knows this better than do we, and says "Without me ye can do nothing." It was because of our need that the Father thus arranged for us. "Be of good courage!" is the Master's word to all who are longing and striving to be of the class called "Conquerors."

Your Adversary the Devil

Temptations seem to be specially permitted at this season of the year. "Roots of bitterness" seem to sprout and grow always, but at this season with ten-fold vigor. Let us remember that Love, not Knowledge, is the final test of our discipleship. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." It was because the apostles had not enough love for one another that they disputed as to which should be the greatest in the Kingdom, and were so determined not to stoop to one another that they neglected also to wash the Master's feet, and gave him the opportunity even in menial things to be servant of all. It was this wrong spirit—this lack of the Lord's Spirit—that made them susceptible to the Adversary's power and led Judas to betray and Peter to deny the Lord's Anointed.

Let us then take heed to ourselves and watch and pray and be very humble and very loving, lest we fall into temptation. Not since that time probably has our great Adversary been more alive than now to do injury or to entrap or to stumble the followers of Jesus.—Z. '08: 86, 87.

"This Do in Remembrance of Me"

Matthew 26:17-30.

WHILE holding, in common with the great majority, that the Memorial Supper was instituted by our Lord on Thursday night in connection with his last celebration of the Passover, and that he was crucified on the next day, Friday, we have no contention with those who suppose that these events took place on other days of the week. We lay great stress on the fact there accomplished and its significance as the antitype of the Passover instituted by Moses, and as the finishing of our Lord's great sacrifice for sins—the sins of the whole world. For these vital principles we are willing to contend earnestly, as they are part of "the faith once delivered to the saints;" but as respects the particular days of the week we will not contend, as in our estimation they are trifling matters, of no value, no consequence, and should therefore in no sense of the word disturb the minds or heart-fellowship of the Lord's people.

Our lesson opens with our Lord's instructions to his disciples as to where they should prepare for him and themselves, as a special and peculiar Jewish family, a place in which to celebrate the requirements of the Law in the type which pointed to our Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God. Respecting this supper our Lord himself said, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." He did not refer to the principal feast, which lasted a week from the 15th day of Nisan. He was referring to the roast-lamb supper, eaten with bitter herbs, which preceded the general feast, and which reminded them of their deliverance from Egypt, and became the basis of their subsequent rejoicing as a liberated people. The upper room was provided for this supper. Things were made ready, and at even, at sundown, after six o'clock, our Lord and the twelve assembled. One of the accounts tells us that there was a dispute amongst the disciples respecting the more honorable positions at the supper, and that Jesus rebuked this ambitious spirit in them by washing their feet, thus illustrating his own humility of heart, his readiness to serve each and all of them. Thus he set them an example that he, whom they esteemed greatest amongst them, should be their principal servant, willing and ready to serve any and all.

"One of You Shall Betray Me"

While they were eating Jesus remarked that one of them would betray him, and at once a spirit of sadness spread over the company, and each one—feeling it incumbent upon him to prove his innocence of such a charge—asked, "Lord, is it I?" With the rest, Judas also put this question, realizing that if he did not also ask, it would imply his acknowledgment that he was the one, and in response to his inquiry Jesus replied, "Thou hast said,"—that is to say, "Yes, I refer to you." Another account tells us that Jesus answered the query by saying that the one for whom he would dip a sop would be the betrayer, and having dipped the sop—a piece of the lamb and a piece of the unleavened bread they were eating—Jesus gave it to Judas, thus indicating him without directly naming him. It would appear, too, that the other disciples up to this time had not learned to know Judas—that it was subsequently they ascertained that he was a thief, etc.

Amongst the Jews and Arabs deceit and betrayal were not so very uncommon, but there was a code of honor recognized according to which no one would eat the food of the person he would in any wise injure. As food was seasoned with salt, it was probably this custom that was known as the "covenant of salt"—the covenant of faithfulness. To succeed in having an enemy eat at your table or take of your food seasoned with salt was at that time amongst those people the equivalent of a pledge of his lasting friendship—that he would never do you injury. Apparently Judas was so lacking of a proper spirit that he did not even acknowledge and obey this custom of the time—to be loyal and faithful to the one whose bread he ate, of whose salt he partook. Hence our Lord's words, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."

Nevertheless Jesus testified that his death was not a victory on the part of his betrayer and his enemies, but in harmony with what had been written of him before by the prophets. Nor are we to consider that Judas in this matter was merely fulfilling a prophecy irrespective of his own responsibility, his own wilfulness in the matter: such a thought is negatived by our Lord's statement, "Woe unto the man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." These words leave no question, we think, that Judas had already enjoyed his full share in the great atonement work through the intimate opportunities he had of coming to a clear knowledge of the truth, and the corresponding responsibilities. Evidently his was the sin unto death—the Second Death. Hence, aside from any future existence we are to consider that his life was a useless, wasted one, and that its joys did not overbalance its sorrows and anguish when to the latter were added his subsequent despair and suicide.

"Take, Eat; This Is My Body"

It was after the Passover Supper, after the eating of the lamb with the herbs and unleavened bread, etc., that Jesus instituted the Memorial Supper which, with all of his followers, by his direction takes the place of the Passover Supper of the Jews. This was a new matter, and the apostles listened with interest to his words as he blessed some of the thin cakes of unleavened bread and then brake them and handed portions to each of his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." What could he mean? During their three years in his company they had learned that he spake in parables and dark sayings. On another occasion he had declared in their hearing that he himself was the bread which came down from heaven, of which if a man partook he would live forever. Now he was handing them some unleavened bread and said it was his body. They evidently understood him to mean that this bread to them would represent or symbolize his body, for he told them on this occasion that thenceforth they should do this in remembrance of him—thenceforth they should remember him as the slain lamb and use unleavened bread to represent his flesh, and partake of this instead of eating as previously of a literal lamb.

He could not have meant, as Roman Catholics and some Protestants believe, that the bread was by his blessing turned into his actual flesh, for he still had his flesh—he was not killed for about fifteen hours later. Hence all the arguments to this effect are foolishness and sophistry. When he said, "This is my flesh," it was as much a figure of speech as when he said a little later, "I am the vine," "I am the door," "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the way, the truth and the life," etc. The right, sane view of the Master's word is apparent: he was represented in all these different ways. In the case under consideration the bread would represent him, his flesh, to his apostles and to all his followers throughout the Gospel age.

As bread stands for and symbolizes all food (indeed wheat is said to contain every element of nutriment in its proper proportion), so the teaching of this symbol is that whoever would have the life which Christ has to give must accept it as the result of his sacrifice. He died that we might live. The rights and privileges which he surrendered voluntarily may be eaten, applied, appropriated by all who have faith in him and who accept him and his instructions—such are reckoned as having imputed to them the perfect human nature, with all its rights and privileges lost by Adam, redeemed by Christ. None can have eternal life except by the eating of this bread from heaven. This applies not only to believers of this present time, but also to those of the future age. Their life-rights and privileges must all be recognized as coming to them through his sacrifice. In a word, the bread representing our Lord's body teaches our justification through the acceptance of his sacrifice.

"Drink Ye All of It"

Next our Lord took a cup containing the fruit of the vine. We are not told that it was wine; therefore it is an open question whether it was fermented or unfermented, and in view of all the circumstances of our time and the requirements of the Lord's Word, we may feel sure that unfermented grape juice or raisin juice will fulfil the terms of his injunction. Since it is never called wine, but merely the cup and the fruit of the vine, there is no room for disputation amongst the Lord's followers. Each may be free to follow his own conscience in the matter of what kind of a fruit of the vine he shall use: for our part we prefer the unfermented. . . .

In connection with the cup the Lord said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (the two oldest Greek MSS. of the New Testament, the Sinaitic and Vatican, omit the word "New"). True, the New Covenant must be sealed with the blood of the Christ before it can go into effect, and it is not to go into effect until the opening of the Millennial age. But there was another Covenant—the old Covenant, the foundation Covenant of all covenants—namely, the Abrahamic Covenant, which was sealed by our Lord's death. That it would be thus sealed was typically represented in the figurative death of Isaac at the hand of Abraham and his figurative resurrection from the dead. The Apostle assures us that Isaac represented our Lord Jesus, and also declares, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"—the Oath-bound Covenant.—Gal. 4:28.

Applying our Lord's words thus to the Abrahamic Covenant, which he was sealing or making sure, we see that it was by his death that he became the heir of that Covenant and all of its glorious provisions for the blessing of all the families of the earth. And from this standpoint we see a special meaning and force in Jesus' words to his followers, "This is my cup, drink ye all of it." Thus understood, the invitation to drink of the Lord's cup signifies an invitation to all of his elect Church of this Gospel age to partake with him of his cup of suffering and death—to lay down their lives with him that they also might have a share with him in the coming glories of the Kingdom, which will be the divine channel for the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise, the blessing of all the families of the earth.

While the eating of the bread and participation in the justification effected by our Lord's death and by the acceptance of the same, will be necessary to the whole world if they would have the restitution blessings purchased by our Lord's sacrifice, nevertheless the cup is not for the world but only for the Church, only for the consecrated of this Gospel age. "Drink ye all of it"—not only all of you drink of it but all of you drink all of it—leave none. There will be none of the sufferings of Christ left over for the coming age, no more suffering for righteousness' sake will then be known to the world—only evil doers will suffer thereafter. Now is the time when whosoever will live godly shall suffer persecution, and when all of the Lord's followers who would be loyal to him and counted worthy to share in his Kingdom glories must expect to drink of his cup. Hence again the Lord unites the two thoughts, saying, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." Those who consecrate during the present time as the Lord's disciples, to walk in his steps, must not only share in justification through faith, but must also share through sacrifice the cup if they would gain the life eternal promised to the elect who now forsake all to be his disciples.

New Wine in the Kingdom

In declaring, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom," our Lord implies a new wine under different conditions at some distant date. He thus confirmed in their minds what he had been teaching them for some weeks previously, namely, that he would not at this time set up his Kingdom, but that instead he would suffer, be crucified, and that they must expect also to suffer with him; and that by and by, when the Kingdom should be established and himself be in glory, his disciples should be with him in his throne. These new thoughts in their minds were confirmed by the lesson now given.

The cup in the present time must speak to them of the crushing of the grapes, the blood of the grapes, their Master's blood, the life sacrificed, poured out, and their lives also sacrificed with him in his service, in his cause. But the sufferings of this present time were linked with the glory that should follow by the thought that all who would drink of the present cup of suffering, ignominy and death would also share in his cup of joy and blessing, glory and honor in the Kingdom. This same thought should be before our minds, and like the apostles of old it will help us more and more to look forward to the Kingdom as the time when suffering for the name of Christ shall cease, and when the glories shall follow and result in the blessing of all the families of the earth. Our Lord here identifies his Kingdom with his second advent, and in no sense of the word intimates that they would drink of this new wine at Pentecost, nor at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor at any other time but in that mentioned in the prayer which he taught them, saying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

This should be the thought before our minds also: in waiting for the Kingdom we are waiting for the second coming of our Lord and his subsequent setting up of the Kingdom; that is, the resurrection change, the glorification of his faithful ones who must be with him and share his glory. No wonder the Apostle declared that he who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure. (1 John 3:3.) He that hath this hope of the new wine in the Kingdom, the participation with his Master in those glories and honors and blessed opportunities for uplifting the world of mankind, will take lightly, yea, joyfully, suffering, trials, sacrifices of this present time—yea, he will be glad to suffer with the Master that they also may be glorified together.

"For the Remission of Sins"

So far as we are concerned, it is in vain that men teach that God forgives sins without exacting a penalty therefor from anybody. It is in vain that they claim that Christ was not the ransom price for the sinner, that it was not necessary that he should die, the Just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us back to harmony with God—in order that God might be just and yet justify the sinner. It is in vain, too, that they claim that it was sufficient that Jesus was a great teacher, by whose **words** the world should be saved. Our reply is in harmony with the Master's statement here and elsewhere and the testimony of all the apostles, that it was necessary that Christ should die for our sins; that our sins could never have been forgiven by divine justice except through the divine arrangement by which he paid our penalty. To us it is a most precious thought, therefore, that our Lord's blood was indeed shed for the remission of sins of the many. And it is also a precious thought to us that we are privileged to be so intimately associated with him as members of his body; that our little sacrifices covered by his merit are in God's sight esteemed as part of the great sin sacrifice for the world; that as joint-sufferers with Christ we are permitted to drink of his cup and be immersed in his baptism into death.

It is equally vain for Evolutionists and Higher Critics to tell us that, so far from man falling from God's likeness into sin and death, he has been on the contrary evoluting upward step by step, from beastly conditions to where he now is. We believe them not. We hold fast the divinely inspired testimony that there was a fall, and that this made necessary the redemptive work; that Christ was the honorable servant of God, privileged and authorized to make atonement for the sins of the whole world; that he began this atonement work in the sacrifice of himself; that he has been carrying it on during this Gospel age by the sacrificing of the members of his body, and that he will soon complete it, when he, with all of his members glorified, shall during the Millennial age distribute to the world the blessings of that redemptive work, causing all to come to a knowledge of the Truth, of the love of God; that its height and depth and length and breadth are immeasurable, yea, all accomplished through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

"In Remembrance of Me"

The Apostle Paul, referring to this Memorial Supper, quotes our Lord as saying, "This do in remembrance of me," and then adds, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:24-26.) The thought is that we are to thus celebrate this great transaction until the time come for the Kingdom celebration of it with the new wine, the joy, the glory, the honors, which we are to share with him who loved us and bought us. The Apostle evidently does not mean merely until the parousia, the presence of the Lord to gather his servants and reward them, but rather until all shall have been gathered and the Kingdom class shall all thus have been set up and glorified.

The same Apostle in the same epistle (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 12:12) emphasizes the thought of the unity, the oneness of the Church, with each other and with the Lord. He declares, "The loaf which we break, is it not the communion [the fellowship] of the body of Christ?" Are we not all as parts of one loaf broken with the Lord? "For we being many are one loaf and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf"; and again he adds, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [participation, fellowship] of the blood of Christ?" Assuredly this is the thought then, that from God's standpoint there is the one great Messiah, the elect Head and the elect members of his body. These, as one loaf, constitute from God's standpoint the bread of everlasting life for the world, and in order to fill this picture each and all must be broken, each and all must partake of the cup of Christ's suffering and death before entering into his glory. And not until all these sufferings have been completed will the Lord's time come for the new dispensation, the new day, the day of blessing instead of cursing, the day of restitution instead of dying, the day of uplifting instead of falling, so far as the world is concerned.—Z. '06:333-335.

Jesus Our Example in Service

Philippians 2:1-11.

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."
—Verse 5.

HUMILITY is one of the most important of the graces of character, one which requires continual cultivation, in order to a continual growth in the likeness of Christ. The opening verses of today's study are an exhortation to brotherly love amongst those who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Savior. The apostle says: "If there be any consolation in Christ, if there be any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels of mercies"—as if he would put them to the test as to whether or not any would deny that these graces appertain to all who have come into Christ as new creatures. Then, as though they had assented to his proposition, conceding that there is comfort, love, fellowship, sympathy and consolation in Christ for one another, he adds: "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

How grand an expression is this, that the great apostle's joy would be full merely by the knowledge of the love and sympathy of the Philippian Church for him, not by the knowledge of their professions of love for the Lord, but the knowledge that they loved, sympathized with and consoled one another, in the proper fellowship of the members of the body of Christ! This would fill his joy more full than would anything else which he could know respecting them. Likewise, we may be sure that the same conditions today would be most pleasing and most acceptable in the sight of our Lord and Savior. The Apostle John had the same thought respecting brotherly love in the church; for he said: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

To the end that such a spirit of perfect unity and fellowship might obtain among the believers at Philippi, St. Paul exhorts that all shall cultivate the grace of humility, and that in every affair each shall take heed that "nothing be done through strife or vain glory," that self-laudation and strivings for preeminence be thoroughly put away as the greatest enemies to the spirit of the Lord and to the blessing of the church. On the contrary, each should have that lowliness of mind which can see the good qualities of fellow members and can appreciate some of these qualities at least as superior to his own. Lowliness of mind does not necessarily signify ignorance of any talents or graces which we ourselves may possess; but as long as the church is in the present imperfect tabernacle condition, the perfection of all the graces, talents and abilities need never be expected in any one person or in any one congregation. Therefore each one may, if he be of lowly mind, see in others certain good qualities or graces superior to his own, and each should delight to recognize these and to esteem their possessor accordingly.

For each one to look merely upon his own things, interests, welfare or talents and to ignore these in others would be to manifest a general selfishness, and consequently a dearth of the spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of love and generosity. In proportion as we are more and more filled with the holy spirit of love, we shall find ourselves interested in the welfare of others. This was the mind, the disposition or spirit which was in our dear Redeemer, the disposition which he so wonderfully manifested and which we must develop in our characters if we would ultimately be of the "little flock" who shall be joint-heirs with Christ in his glory.—Romans 8:29.

Our Lord's Wonderful Example

That we may partially discern how our Lord Jesus exemplified this spirit of humility, the apostle briefly sums up in few words the story of the Master's humiliation and shows how it led to our Lord's present exaltation. He points out to us that when our Lord Jesus was a spirit being, before he stooped to take the human nature and to bear the penalty of human sin, he was in "a form of God," a spirit form, a high and glorious condition. But instead of being moved selfishly to grasp ambitiously for things higher than those which God had conferred upon him, instead of seeking to set up a rival empire as did Satan, our Lord did not meditate a robbery of God to make himself God's equal, as Satan had done, saying, "I will ascend above the stars [the bright ones, the angelic hosts], I will be as the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13, 14.) Quite to the contrary of this our Lord Jesus, "the beginning of the creation of God," was willing to humble himself in harmony with the Father's plan, was willing to take a lower nature and to do a work which would imply not only a great deal of humiliation, but also a great deal of pain and suffering.

The apostle points out how the Lord Jesus demonstrated his willingness and humility by complying with this arrangement, and showed that after our Lord became a man he continued to be of the same humble spirit, willing to carry out the divine plan to the very letter, by dying as man's ransom-price. Not only so, but when it pleased the Father to require that the death should be a most humiliating one in every respect, perhaps beyond the requirements of the ransom merely, our Lord did not draw back, but stooped even to the ignominious "death of the cross." Here, as the apostle points out, we have the most wonderful demonstration of humility, meekness and obedience to God that was ever manifested or that could be conceived. And this is the pattern which the apostle holds up for us to copy. "Let this [same humble] mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

The High Reward of His Obedience

It was on account of this humility, which enabled our Lord to render perfect obedience, that the Heavenly Father has so highly honored our dear Redeemer as to raise him from the dead to the divine nature, to a station far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named. That this is the apostle's argument is shown by the word "wherefore" (Verse 9); that is, on this account, on account of this humility just described, God hath highly exalted him.

Not only did our Lord's beautiful and perfect humility and obedience demonstrate that he was absolutely loyal to the heavenly Father, but it also demonstrated that in him the Father's spirit of love dwelt richly; for he shared the Father's love for the race he redeemed. On this account also he is found worthy to be the divine agent in the blessing of all the families on the earth, as per the terms of the divine covenant made with father Abraham. Thus our Lord Jesus has become the head of the "seed of Abraham" which is to bless the race redemmed. Hence it will be to him that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, when Jehovah's due time shall come for the pouring out of divine blessings upon the redeemed world, that all may come to a knowledge of the truth and, if they will, into full harmony with God and to eternal life.

The apostle holds up the Lord Jesus as the great example of a proper humility, self-abnegation and obedience to God in the interests of others. Moreover, he also holds up before us the reward, the high exaltation of our Lord by the heavenly Father, the result of his obedience, that we might be encouraged and might realize that if faithful in following the footsteps of our Redeemer and in sacrificing the advantages of the present to serve the Lord and his cause, then in due time we also may expect to be glorified with him. Then we shall share his name, his throne and his work, as members of his anointed body, his church, his joint-heir.

In the context (Verses 12-16) the apostle pays a most beautiful tribute to the church at Philippi, while urging them to continue on in the race-course in which they had already started. He would have them make more and more progress, working out in themselves through humility and obedience the character, the disposition of Christ, with fear and trembling, and thus working out each his own share in the great salvation to glory, honor and immortality which God has promised.

Suggestions as to Overcoming

We cannot work out our own justification. But being justified by the blood of Christ and being called with the heavenly calling, we make our calling and election sure. We work out our own share in the great salvation to which we have been called in Christ, by giving heed to the Lord's instructions, by following the pattern which he has set for us. In so doing, however, we shall not attain perfection in the flesh, but merely perfection of will, of intention, of heart. Then, if we keep the body under to the extent of our ability, its weaknesses and imperfections will be reckoned as covered by the merit of our Lord, the Holy One.

It is encouraging also for us to know that this warfare is not merely one of our own, against weakness and sin, but that God is for us, has called us, and is helping us. By his Word of promise he already works in us, and has led us thus far in the willing and the doing of his will, his good pleasure. Furthermore, he will continue thus to lead us, to help us and to work in us by his Word of truth, if we will but continue to give heed to his counsel. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" to every one that so accepts it; and no greater stimulus to true godliness can be found than the "exceeding great and precious promises given us, that **by these** ye might be partakers of the divine nature."—2 Peter 1:4.

Moreover, in following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus, . . . we are not to **murmur** by the way, finding fault with its difficulties and its narrowness. Nor are we to **dispute** respecting it, nor to seek to have any other way than that which divine providence marks out before us, realizing that the Lord knows exactly what experiences are necessary to our development in the school of Christ. If obedience were possible while our mouths are filled with complaints and dissatisfaction with the Lord and with the lot which he has permitted; it would indicate that we are at least out of sympathy with the spirit of his arrangement. Surely such obedience, if it were possible, would not meet the divine approval. But it is not possible. Hence, as the apostle exhorts, we should "do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke." —Z. '18:58, 59.

Hosanna! Hosanna! to the Son of David!

Text:—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." —Matt. 21:9.

FOUR days before his crucifixion our Lord rode to Jerusalem on the ass. The people preceding and following him shouted, "Hosanna to Messiah, Son of David and King of Israel," and spread their outer garments and palm branches on the road, as was the custom with great heroes in triumphal procession.

For three and a half years from the time of his baptism at thirty years of age our Lord had been preaching the Kingdom of heaven at hand. Additionally he had sent forth his disciples two and two: first the twelve, and later seventy others, to preach the same thing, namely, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand"—get your hearts into a condition of readiness that you may be received into that Kingdom, to be associated with Messiah in the blessing of all the families of the earth, in harmony with the promise made to father Abraham. Our Lord had become quite noted. "The common people heard him gladly." Some of them said, "Never man spake like this man." "And they all bare witness to the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, for he spake as one having authority (knowledge) and not as a scribe." On more than one occasion it appeared as though the people would take him by force to make him a king; but our Lord avoided the matter and withdrew himself and discouraged the efforts. The scribes and Pharisees, jealous of his popularity, ashamed of his following and afraid that he would yet become the center of a futile movement antagonistic to the Roman government and their own prestige, had already threatened his life. As it is written, "Jesus could no longer walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him." Their antagonism to him was all the greater after the awakening of Lazarus.

Behold, Thy King Cometh

Suddenly a change was manifest in Jesus' attitude. He came to Bethany, notwithstanding the protest of his disciples, who then valiantly said, "Let us go that we may die with him." Discarding caution he went directly to the home of Lazarus and his sisters. There he was the guest of honor with his disciples at a special feast. There Mary poured upon him the precious spikenard perfume which Jesus declared was an anointing for his burial. In that expression we have the key to his outward course. He knew that his hour was come; that the end of his ministry was at hand; that he was about to be crucified.

It was under these circumstances that the next morning he not only did not hinder the people from proclaiming him King, but he sent his disciples to bring the ass upon which he was to ride in triumph as a King, for it was the custom of Israel's kings to be thus presented to the people. The account tells us that the people hailed Jesus as the Son of David, the King of Israel, the Messiah; and that in the concourse were Pharisees who had come from Jerusalem to Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus whom he had awakened from death; these beheld the proceeding and expostulated with Jesus' disciples, telling them that Jesus should call the attention of the people to what they were saying and that he should reprove them. Our Lord's answer shows how important was the event. He said, "If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out." (Luke 19:40.) The Evangelist calls our attention to the fact that the entire procedure was in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, as through him the Lord had declared centuries beforehand the events which must transpire at the appointed hour, namely, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."—Zech. 9:9.

Here we see the reason why our Lord said that if the people would hold their peace and not shout the stones would cry out; because the Lord through prophecy had foretold a shout and the Scriptures must be fulfilled. How strengthening it is to faith to realize that even the jots and tittles of prophecy must all be fulfilled! Thus realizing the Divine supervision of the affairs of our Lord and of his followers we may indeed have a strong consolation and good hope, realizing that all things written in the Law and by the prophets shall have their fulfilment in due course.

Little did the Jews on that Palm Sunday realize what was taking place! And indeed very few Christians to this day realize the purport of that occasion. Let us see what it was. God had promised a Messiah and that he should be of the Seed of Abraham and of the family of David. Zechariah's prophecy quoted had foretold his formal entry. All those things must be fulfilled: God must keep his part of the contract. If failure occurred it must be Israel's failure. And so it was. Israel, as represented by her rulers who "sat in Moses' seat," were not ready for the Messiah. If they had believed the preaching of John the Baptist a genuine reformation would have made them ready to receive the Messiah. But not being in heart condition led them to expect a worldly conqueror rather than a "Lamb of God" to take away the sin of the world. We read that "All men were in expectation of him." And yet, when he offered himself, they were ashamed of him and of his peculiar following of fishermen, publicans, etc. The rulers of the people received him not but plotted his destruction, and the common people furnished not only multitudes to cry, Hosanna, on this occasion, but also later multitudes to cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," under the influence of their leaders.

As for our Lord, he knew that his hour was come. He had foretold that he would be rejected and crucified, but it was his duty to make the tender of himself as Israel's King. The very prophecy he was fulfilling declared not only that he would come as King, but foretold that the people would "shout" and also that Israel would be cast off and have a "double" part of disfavor—the length of the favor they had enjoyed as God's peculiar people. The prophet specified, saying, "Even today do I declare that I will render **double** unto thee." (Zech. 9:12.) Thus he indicated that particular Palm Sunday as the turning point of Israel's career. Our Lord also indicated the importance of that day as the turning point in Israel's history; for when he had ridden to the brow of Mt. Olivet, overlooking Jerusalem, the procession stopped, Jesus saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, Ye shall see me no more until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." —Luke 13:34, 35.

In other words, that first Palm Sunday was the turning point marking the rejection of natural Israel as a nation and the inauguration of Spiritual Israel as the "holy nation," the "royal priesthood," the "peculiar people" for a purpose. Other Scriptures show us that natural Israel is to return to Divine favor as soon as the "election" of spiritual Israel shall be accomplished. But at his Second Advent Messiah will no longer present himself as a man riding upon an ass, but, as the Scriptures declare, he shall come a spirit being, invisible to men, but nevertheless with great glory and power, which shall be "revealed in flaming fire," symbolical of judgments. We are assured that then the blinded eyes of Israel's understanding will be open and they shall look upon him whom they pierced and shall mourn for him: and the Lord declares that then he will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication and the blessing of the New Covenant shall be theirs. As it is written, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34.) "And I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh."—Ezek. 11:19.

Rejecting the Lamb

But that Palm Sunday was a notable and important day to Israel from another standpoint. At the beginning of their national existence, when they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, God specially arranged for their Passover. . . . We notice that their passover lamb was to be taken up and brought into the house on the ninth day of the month Nisan, while it was to be killed on the fourteenth day. As John the Baptist has declared, our Lord was the antitypical "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.) And now the antitypical Passover sacrifice was due, when the Lamb of God was to be slain for the sins of the world; and Israel as a nation should have received the Lamb of God into their house by faith on that very Palm Sunday on which he presented himself as King. He filled the double role of King and Passover Lamb. However, as they rejected him as King, so likewise as their Passover Lamb he was not accepted or received; thus as a nation they were not passed over or saved, but, contrariwise, their national destruction followed. As the rich man of the parable of Dives and Lazarus they died nationally from divine favor.

But while our Lord was rejected both as Lamb and King by the Jewish nation there were individual exceptions. All the "Israelites indeed," in whom was no guile, were granted special enlightenment of the eyes of their understanding. These recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God—their Redeemer. And not only so, but they recognized him also as the great King, the King of Glory, the Messiah. As indicating the blindness of the nation and the spiritual sight of the small remnant who received him, our Lord said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." These who now recognize their Redeemer, and voluntarily become obedient to him by a full consecration of their hearts, are a very exceptional class, as well as a very small class. His cause has really been unpopular from the first, and only such as are willing to endure hardship as good soldiers have the courage to volunteer to be soldiers of the Cross. There is an outward religion today that is popular, just as there was an outward religion in our Lord's day that was popular. But to be true disciples, followers of Jesus, to walk in his footsteps, to forsake the world and follow him, means to all his disciples since what it meant to his disciples at the First Advent—alienation and separation. Our Lord said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me e it hated you. If ye were of the world, the d would love its own; but because ye are not e world, but I have chosen you out of the world, efore the world hateth you." (John 15:18, 19.) n he said, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, gathereth fruit unto life eternal."—John 6. . . .

Two Antitypical Fulfilments

We have noticed that our Lord's riding on the to Jerusalem was a fulfilment of a prophecy and pe. We note now that there are secondary fulents of the same on a still higher plane, (1) The claiming of Jesus by the multitude shouting osanna," was a proclamation of faith in him as Messiah; so we today, and all of the Lord's owers down through the Gospel Age, have first led him Messiah and proclaimed ourselves beers in him—and this to us was Justification by ith. Hence, Palm Sunday may be considered as nbolizing the attainment of justification by those o recognize Jesus and are willing to acknowledge n.

(2) Subsequently at the Memorial Supper Jesus ssed the cup to all of his followers, saying, "Drink all of it." This signifies full consecration, even to death, on the part of all who accept the Lord's itation to thus share his cup, the sufferings of rist. In this sense of the word, dear friends, I ist that all of us have thus declared our faith in e Messiah, the Redeemer. I trust that we have taken the Lamb into our hearts, into our homes.

A second antitypical fulfilment of today's lesson is brought to our attention by the fact that everything pertaining to the Jewish people was typical of that nation's connection with spiritual Israel's experiences. As Jesus offered himself in the flesh to fleshly Israel at the proper time as their King, so in the parallel of time he must offer himself to spiritual Israel at the appointed time as their King of Glory. As the time of natural Israel's visitation was at the First Advent, so the time of spiritual Israel's visitation is at the Second Advent. As nominal Israel stumbled and was blinded and failed to receive the King and lost the blessing, so will it be with nominal spiritual Israel. Thus it is written, "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both houses of Israel." As with the Jews (every "Israelite indeed," in whom was no guile, was specially blessed and kept and assisted), so it will be here. All others will stumble and, as it is written, "A thousand shall fall at thy side." That which to the one class will be the stepping-stone to higher favors and the Kingdom blessings, will to the other class be a stumbling-stone. . . . "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts 13:41.) We see here the force of the Scriptural declaration that it is given or granted to some to understand the deep things of God and not given or permitted to others. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to all outsiders (to all not members of the inner circle of "Israelites indeed") these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings, that hearing they might hear and not understand."—B.S.M. Vol. 6:11:3, 4.

"I Have Prayed for Thee"

'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that night sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy h fail not."—Luke 22:31, 32.

S the Passover season approached our Lord not only said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and found himself ding "with strong crying and tears unto him was able to save him out of death;" but addially he had great solicitude for his dear followand sought to arouse them to an appreciation he hour of temptation into which they were ring, saying, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter temptation." Not only was that the most tryime of our Lord's earthly experience, but it was the most trying time for his apostles, and pararly for Judas and Peter. Both of these men prominent amongst the apostles, the one as reasurer and purchasing agent of the little , the other as a specially bold champion of the s cause, who had, as the mouthpiece of the e, announced their faith in Jesus as the ah, and who had publicly declared that alh all men should forsake the Lord he would o so. From the human standpoint it would been surmised that any temptation that might upon these thirteen would have been upon the weaker and less prominent ones and not upon the three most prominent.

Three Tempted—Variant Results

We may draw some valuable lessons from noting the course of the three specially tempted. Our Lord's course was the proper one, humility, fear, an appreciation of the trials leading to watchfulness and prayer. He escaped and came out of the trial stronger every way, and on the day of his public arraignment before the priests and Pilate, and when he was crucified before the multitude, he was the calmest of the calm, for the Lord had strengthened him. He is our pattern: our course should similarly be one that would not deny dangers, would not boast of our courage, strength, but would lean upon the arm of the Lord and through his grace come off conquerors.

Peter's case we remember well: A good man of strong character, he realized not his danger, and hence was not prepared for the arts of Satan, by which he was placed in so trying a position that his boasted courage fled, his wonted strength of character vanished, he denied his Lord even with profanity. What a lesson to us of human frailty, and of how we ourselves might be overtaken and ensnared by the wiles of the devil. How much each one needs to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation—lest we succumb to temptation. How much we each need to remember the prayer the Lord gave us as an ensample, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

That was a fateful time for Judas: If the Adversary could so juggle, deceive and mislead the true-hearted Peter because he was off his guard in watching and praying, what might we not expect he might be able to accomplish with Judas, whose heart was not right, who was selfish, self-seeking, ambitious, covetous? We cannot wonder that Satan's victory over Judas was soon accomplished—that he fell quickly into the snare of the Adversary, and lent his heart and energy to the betrayal of the Master for thirty pieces of silver. His case was very different from that of Peter, the loyal, the true, for the moment bewildered and off his guard and fearful. The cases of the two men are very different because, although the danger was the same, their hearts were in different conditions.

"Take Heed to Yourselves"

Is it not so with all of the Lord's followers? Is not this the secret of the differing results of temptation as they surely come to each one of us? The Judas class of today and always are those who when temptation comes receive it, entertain it, enter into the spirit of the ambition or otherwise wrong allurement, and are swallowed up by it. The Peter class is also with us ever since; and today the true-hearted, but not sufficiently watching and praying and on guard against the Adversary's allurements, are at times taken unawares, and for a moment not only dishonor the Lord but dishonor their own hearts and consciences also. The difference between these two classes is the heart condition: the Peter class do those things which they do not wish to do, or leave undone those things which they really desire to do, and their difficulty lies evidently in the weakness of their flesh, in the power of the Adversary, and in their failure to lay hold upon the help which the Lord has promised, the succor in their time of need.

The Judas class are those whose hearts are not loyal but selfish, and who therefore enter into the Adversary's scheme heartily, and are not, in their wrong course, going contrary to their own wills but in harmony therewith. The difference in God's sight is seen in that, although both Peter and Judas repented, the one was accepted back to divine favor, the other was not—the one who was merely entrapped, but who at heart was not disloyal, was restored and blessed; the other, though not without conscience, as shown by his later remorse, was without the genuine loyalty of heart which in the Lord's sight is indispensable, and the absence of which, considering Judas' intimate acquaintance with the Lord, was inexcusable.

Our Lord's words in our text give us the assurance that, because of this difference in the hearts of the two men, he could properly be the advocate of the one before the Father but not the advocate of the other. He could stand for and represent the one who at heart was loyal to him, however weak his flesh, however careless he might be of the divine provision for his protection. He was still one of the Lord's sheep, therefore subject to the Shepherd's care. He was still one of the Lord's members, therefore subject to the oversight and interest of the Head in his welfare. He was still one of the members of the Lord's espoused virgin Church, whom he loved and for whom he gave his life, and for whom, therefore, he might properly and did make supplication as the betrothed Bridegroom.

But in the case of Judas, his heart alienated through selfishness, any appreciation for the Lord and love for him which he possessed at the beginning of the ministry had evidently died, been swallowed up of selfishness and ambition—and into that heart thus fully withdrawn from the Lord we are told Satan entered. By thus willingly withdrawing his heart and strength and consecration from the Lord and lending the same of deliberate intention to self-seeking, he became a tool of the Adversary. As our Master said, "It must needs be that offences come"—that he should be crucified—"but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh."

Similar Conditions Today

In our experience the Passover season has always been one of special danger, special besetment to the Lord's consecrated people. For some reason unknown to us the Adversary seems to be permitted to have special power at this time. We have noticed time after time that, as we approach the Passover season, Satan's activity has been manifested by some kind of an attack upon the Truth and by some kind of a special trial or test upon the Truth in connection therewith. Although we know in advance that none of the Lord's disciples true at heart will be plucked out of his hand by the Adversary, nevertheless we fancy that we can sympathize to some extent with our Lord's feelings when he exhorted the disciples to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation.

True, Jesus knew who it was that should betray him, and was, therefore, not surprised or disconcerted in respect to Judas' course; and yet, undoubtedly, the thought that one who had eaten bread with him should "lift up his heel against him" (John 13:18), one who had been his companion, helper, familiar friend, should become his enemy (Psalm 41:9), all this must have had a saddening effect upon our dear Master, who could assuredly sympathize with even his bitterest enemies as well as with those who, Peter-like, failed at the first to withstand the Adversary's assault but who subsequently are recovered by divine mercy and aid.

Since the body of Christ is one, and since our Lord declares that whatsoever is done to one of the least of his members is done to him, it follows that the Judas class and the Peter class all down through the Gospel age to the present moment have been betraying the Lord in proportion as they have betrayed or denied his members. We, therefore, should note the significance of his statement to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."

For all of the Peter class the Lord is the Head, the Representative, the Advocate before the Father. Without his aid, without appearance for us and plication to us of the merit of his own sacrifice, ne of us could stand, all would be judged un- orthy, unfit to have part or lot in the great essings which the Lord has invited us to share th Jesus. And as the Master prayed for such, tercedes for such, makes good the unwilling im- rfections of such, so should all who have his Spirit el generously, kindly, sympathetically, speak help- lly to the Peter class. But as the Master had no ich words of sympathy for Judas, the open and remeditated enemy and traitor, so likewise, what- ver our sorrowful feelings for such may be, there no room for any expression of sympathy or co- peration in their evil work: as for any of the postles to co-operate with Judas would have meant share in his evil deeds.

"Sift You as Wheat"

However much sympathy we may feel with Peter and others of similar character and experience —since, however much we may rejoice with him hat the Lord prayed for him so that his careless- ness in the matter of watching and praying for himself did not result in his undoing and his loss of relationship to the Lord—nevertheless we should strive not to be of the Peter class, but of the class represented by our Lord himself. Let us be of the watching, praying and faithful kind, who will not be overtaken by the Adversary's temptations of the present time.

We are in the time of the separation of the wheat from the tares, and, more than this, the separation of the chaff from the wheat also—a sifting process. While this figure may to some extent fit to the experiences of the Church in the past, we are sure that it does specially apply to the Church in the 'ends of the ages"—to those who were living in the end of the Jewish age, and to those who are now living. . . . And our Lord is pleased to permit hese siftings; they are necessary, apparently, that he Judas class may be entirely sifted out, and that he Peter class may be so thoroughly stirred up by e trials and difficulties and realization of their own eaknesses, and the knowledge that they would terly fail without the Lord's sustaining grace, that ese lessons may prove profitable to them, develop- g in them more and more of meekness, watchful- ss, prayerfulness and trust in our all-powerful ad.

We remember in this connection our Lord's rds which indicate that the present will be a time rial which "will try all them that dwell upon the of the whole earth." (Rev. 3:10.) We remem- the Apostle's statement also that it will be a of fiery trial upon those who are of the true rch, saying, "Every man's work shall be tried s by fire," and his assurance is that only the , silver and precious stones of faith, hope and will abide the fiery trial.—1 Cor. 3:13.

"The Fire of That Day"

Vherever perfect love has not been attained the ' of this day, the siftings of this day, will mani- it—the Lord will separate the deficient ones. may cause us sorrow, as earthly ties are ed and fond hopes blighted; nevertheless the 's message to us on the subject is figuratively represented in the command which he gave to Aaron and his sons, when two of the under-priesthood perished because they offered strange fire before the Lord which he had not commanded them (Lev. 10:1.) Moses as the Lord's mouthpiece declared that the survivors in the priesthood must make no mourning or lamentation for those whom the Lord had cut off. To have done so would have implied disloyalty to the Lord and a failure to appreciate his wisdom and justice and love in the matter.—Lev. 10:6.

How searching will be the tests which will prove our love and loyalty to the Lord and his divine arrangements is clearly intimated in our Lord's prophecy respecting our day when he said that the sifting would be of such a kind as would "deceive if it were possible the very elect." It will not be possible to deceive the very elect, because for these our glorious Head stands sponsor. They are his followers, they are his betrothed, they are his members; he is their Head and Representative and Ambassador; he intercedes, supplicates, prays for them, and their faith will fail not because they are his, because—however imperfect they may be as respects the flesh—at heart they are perfect, thoroughly loyal to him and to his cause, to their fellow-members.

So, then, we sound again, as we have previously done at this season of the year, the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our words, like the Master's, will fall on two classes —some will make light of the warning and expose themselves to danger; others will hearken to the warning of the Master's voice, and to them it will be a part of the power of God unto their preservation.—Z. '06:118-120.

KERNELS

Those who perceive the matter clearly see that the Passover has to do only with the household of faith. It is in full accord with this that the Lord's Supper, which antitypes the eating of the Lamb, is not offered to the world, but is strictly and exclusively an institution for the household of faith. . . . We urge that none overlook the privilege, and assure all who participate with honest intention of heart, as recognizing the Lord and the cleansing power of his sacrifice and the consecration which we have made to him, that a special blessing will surely result from the keeping of this feast, from the memorializing of the great central fact upon which the entire plan of God for this age and for the next is built.—Z. '06:100, 102.

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Each year seems to add to the interest of the Lord's people in the celebration of the death of "Christ, our Passover." Each year the matter seems to be more clearly grasped, and the solemnity and holy joy proper to the occasion seems to be the more intense, and the overflowing blessing to be more pronounced.—Z. '00:131.

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Old Corn Gems

No. 102

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"Finally, Be All of One Mind"

Finally, be all of one mind [harmonious—in accord], having passion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be teous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but rariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that should inherit a blessing."—1 Pet. 3:8, 9.

ARMONY does not mean alike-ness. Rather it signifies unity with diversity: and this is the meaning of the Greek word translated one mind" in our text. The Lord's will respect- his people does not contemplate exact same- ss, wholly ignoring individual characteristics and culiarities; on the contrary, a diversity with har- ny is more desirable than a sameness; as, for tance, it is the harmonious union of the seven ors that constitutes the beauty of the rainbow. also in music: one strikes a chord on the piano the organ and the result is harmony, oneness, ion—the variety of the notes gives a melody ich could not be obtained from any one of them, from a sameness of equal volume. This is the ought the Apostle's words give us in respect to d's people: they are of various natural tempera- ents and dispositions and peculiarities, and the vine alchemy by which the human is transmuted to the spiritual, the old mind into the new mind, es not wholly destroy, and is not intended to stroy, the elements of character and disposition; it is intended to take from each one its dross and perfection and discordancy, and thus to permit eventually to unite in and develop into a har- onious whole.

The Lord does not expect, however, that this ndition of complete harmony, will be attained by s people the instant of their consecration. On the ntrary, as the Apostle indicates in our text, this tainment of harmony is the result, the glorious nsummation,—rather than the beginning of the rk of grace in the Lord's people: he says, **nally,"** not primarily, we are to be all of one nd—harmonious. It requires long years, gener- y, in the school of Christ, for his disciples to so ow in grace and in knowledge and in love,—ere ey reach the glorious condition expressed in our t, even "finally."

The Apostle Paul intimates that we are to con- ue so to grow in grace and in knowledge, and in e, as to attain in heart, in will, the stature of a fect man in Christ. . . . and finally attain to ideal condition represented in our text,—a con- on of harmony with the Lord and with each er, which indicates that the work of grace has progressed—that the mark of perfect love has **well attained** in the heart, even though it be possible still to fully express it in every word act of life. . . .

o doubt all have been struck with the fact that e who manifest the deepest interest in the divine are not always the most smooth and most able people in the world. . . . The very ity which the Apostle mentions in this text as mindedness or harmony is peculiarly lacking naturally in the disposition of the majority of those who become deeply interested in present truth. . . .

We want to suggest an explanation as to why it is that so many of the Lord's people are combatively disposed. A wrangling and contentious disposition is the result of large combativeness—misdirected—unwisely exercised. Combativeness itself is not a bad quality. On the contrary, it is a good quality,—a quality actually indispensable to the attainment of the prize set before us in the Gospel. Those who lack combativeness, lack backbone; lack the ability to walk an upright life, under present conditions; they are like a boat on the river which has neither oars nor wheel nor screw-propeller. They can do nothing but float with the current, for they lack the apparatus necessary to stem it. There are many goody-goody people who lack firmness, lack character, lack combativeness, and who could not think of anything else than floating with the popular current; and these frequently are mistaken for "saints" when they are nothing of the kind. They are not even of the kind of material that the Lord takes to make "saints" out of. . . . They are totally lacking in firmness, in combativeness, in character, cannot possibly comply with these conditions, and are not in the race.

So then, if any of those who have grasped the truth, and who have been grasped and drawn by the truth to consecration to the Lord, have at times felt the perversity of their natural dispositions—their combativeness, contentiousness and wrangling disposition, and felt discouraged on this account, let them thank God and take courage. Let them realize that this very disposition constitutes one qualification for enlistment and service under the Captain of our salvation:—**although such a service will mean the bringing of this contrary disposition into accord with the spirit of love,** which, in the end, will mean that the wrangling disposition will be subdued, and the combativeness be properly turned to good account in another direction.

But while taking all the encouragement we can from the thought that the Lord is wishing and is seeking and calling out a fighting class of "conquerors," who could not be conquerors unless there were something to conquer, and who could not conquer unless they possessed something of the conquering or combative disposition, let us nevertheless, promptly take ourselves in hand, realizing that the good quality of combativeness has in every instance been misdirected, and that from the moment we enlist as soldiers of the Cross of Christ our combativeness is to be turned into new channels. We are to learn, first of all, that our combativeness is not to be exercised toward the Lord, that we should resist his will; but that, on the contrary, we are to make a full surrender to him of our thoughts and words and conduct. We are to remember that combativeness is not to be used toward the brethren; for to fight against the brethren is to fight against God, against the truth, against the fellow-members of our own brigade. Instead of fighting against the brethren, we are to love them, and to fight **for** them, even as we are to fight for the Lord and for the truth. We are to remember, too, that our combativeness is not to be exercised against our friends, our neighbors, or the world in general. No; all of these have plenty to contend against without having our opposition. On the contrary, they need our sympathy, they need our help, they need our encouragement, they need whatever we can render them in the way of uplift.

Fighting the Good Fight of Faith.—1 Tim. 6.12.

How, then, and against what shall we exercise our combativeness, that it may be well directed to the Lord's pleasement and in the service of his cause? We answer, that our combativeness is to be turned against sin, and that its first exercise must begin with ourselves: the battle with self is the greatest battle, and we have the Lord's Word for it that he that "ruleth his spirit (his own mind, will) is better than he that taketh a city," because he has to that extent learned to exercise the combativeness of a true character in the right direction, in self-control. It is after we have had considerable experience in battling with sin and selfishness in ourselves, in casting the beam out of our own eyes, in subduing anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts and flesh—it is then, and by means of this severe battle and experience, that we will be prepared to assist the brethren, and to assist our neighbors in their difficulties—to help them to overcome their besetments and weaknesses.

Whoever starts out by fighting even the sins of others before he has made a vigorous campaign against his own weaknesses and errors, is making a mistake. He needs **humility** and **sympathy** to assist the others to fight their battles, and this he cannot gain without first battling with himself and learning to appreciate how strong is the foe to be contended with, and how thoroughly entrenched is sin and selfishness in all the avenues of the flesh. He even needs to be worsted in some of his battles with self in order to have a clear appreciation of his own inability to overcome and to force him to go to the throne of the heavenly grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help. He needs this because, as the Apostle says, it is when we are weak that we are strong; and when we are strong in our self-confidence, and therefore neglect to go to the Lord, then we are weak and liable to make failure in the battle, and to be overcome by the enemy—Sin.—Heb. 4:16; 2 Cor. 12:10.

All those who have had any experience in the matter, and who have learned how and where to direct their combative energies, find that there is full scope for the exercise of every particle of combativeness he possesses. (1) In himself, **continually**; as the Apostle expressed it, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). O, how much of energy and how much persistency in fighting the good fight of faith, and of loyalty to the Lord, is needful in the conquering of self—"bringing every thought [and so far as possible, every word and act] into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Plenty of room here for combativeness: plenty of room for all the contention and wrangling we want:—contention with sin and self-will, wrangling with the will of the flesh and opposing it at every step—mortifying it, killing its affections and desires. No wonder the Apostle speaks of these present experiences as a fight; no wonder he tells us that we must be prepared to endure hardness as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) As soon as the victory over self has been gained, and as soon as the new mind has put a garrison in every quarter of the conquered body, to guard it from rising in insurrection, to hold it in subjection to the King of kings and Lord of lords—forthwith all the remaining energies that can be spared from self-control will find ample opportunity for usefulness in battling for the Lord, battling for the brethren, battling for the truth, battling against error, battling against all the wiles of the devil, "for we are not ignorant of his devices," as the Apostle declares.

(3) As the eyes of our understanding get opened, wider and wider, we see the great conflict that is progressing throughout the world between righteousness and sin, between our Lord and the god of this world and his blinded representatives, who ignorantly think that they are doing God service and are often found fighting against the truth and against the true soldiers of the Cross, their brethren, even as in the case of Paul. We remember how he, as Saul of Tarsus, persecuted the Church, mistakenly misusing his combativeness in a wrong way. We remember how the Lord called to him in the way, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—Why are you fighting against God, opposing the truth and his cause? In Paul's case we see how that as soon as the eyes of his understanding were opened he became a most valiant soldier of the cross, hesitating not to lay down his life in the service of the Lord and the brethren, who, once he had ignorantly opposed.

It was the same combativeness which made Paul a violent persecutor that subsequently made him the most valiant of the apostles in the defence of the truth. And so it was also with others of the apostles. Those who had the largest amount of combativeness naturally, when it was turned into the proper channels, became thereby the strongest and most valiant for the truth. Peter, for instance, full of combativeness, and at first seriously impeded by it, ready in defence of the Lord to smite off the ear of the high priest's servant, was very valiant subsequently in the use of his talents to the Lord's praise. James and John, two others specially favored and recognized of the Lord, and specially used in the service of the truth, were of combative dispositions, so much so that they were known as the "sons of thunder;" and it was these two who were so incensed at the Samaritans who refused to receive our Lord into their city, and who were so full of love and zeal for the Master that they inquired, "Lord, wilt thou that we call down fire from heaven to consume these men and their city?" They had the combativeness, they had the courage, they had the zeal; but they had not yet learned how to direct it, and so the Master intimated, when he said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save m." By and by, when they were anointed with holy spirit at Pentecost, and had learned gradu- y what spirit they were of (what spirit the Master s of, and what spirit they must be of as his ciples), they understood better how their com- tiveness and zeal were to be used. And hence we d them loyal soldiers of the cross, shunning not nger, enduring hardness as good soldiers of the ord Jesus, even unto death.

It was this natural combativeness consecrated to od, and rightly directed through the spirit, that d Peter and one of the others, when threatened, nd charged straitly by the Sanhedrin that they hould preach no more in the name of Jesus, to ourageously withstand this **illegal** restraint upon heir liberties and rights as Jews, under the Law, nd to be obedient to the voice of the heavenly call, nd to declare, "Whether it be right in the sight f God to hearken unto you more than unto God, udge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which ve have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). The Lord new whom he was choosing for his apostles, and we see clearly that weak, vacillating, nerveless men would not have served the cause as did these whom Jesus chose. And it is but reasonable that we conclude that the Lord similarly throughout this age, s seeking for and choosing strong characters, those who dare to do right; who dare to incur the frown of the world and its slights and sneers, its scoffs and its jeers, its persecution because of fidelity to the Lord and to the brethren. This is overcoming; —and to whatever extent any realize that they are deficient in these qualities let them cultivate this combativeness in this proper direction—to combat weakness, combat sin, combat subserviency to those hings which are contrary to the Lord and his Word.

Faith and the Messages Also Essential

But combativeness alone would not be sufficient. needs proportionate faith, in order to use the ombativeness aright. Hence we hear our Lord's ord, "This is the victory that overcometh the orld, even your faith." Faith in the Lord must be e power that will move his people and energize em. Not faith in creeds, nor faith in men, nor th in ourselves, but faith in the Lord and in his ceeding great and precious promises. As the amboat wheels represent its combativeness, by ich it battles against and pushes the water, and s is enabled to go upstream, so its steam-power, ough the engine, represents faith, which must be ind the combativeness, to exercise the com- veness—to lead us to endure hardness, to direct in fighting the good fight and to hope for the ards to be attained.

Similarly the fuel and the boiler generating the m represent the Word and providences of God, ch produce in us the cause, the power of the h which energizes us in stemming the current. exceeding great and precious promises of the ne Word were given to us as the basis of faith, the fuel to produce the power in us to will and o God's good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). And hence e gracious promises must not be neglected; they be continually used and must continue in us ergize us. And the energy must be applied, e must progress proportionately against the course of this world, if we would attain to the glorious conditions to which we have been called.

While we should ever remember (lest otherwise we should be discouraged), that the attainment of a control of our own spirits, our own minds, and the bringing of these into full accord, full harmony, with the Lord and, so far as possible, into accord with all of the Lord's people who are in accord with him, is to be "finally," nevertheless we are not to delay our endeavor to reach that final and grand development to which the Apostle exhorts us in our text. We are to have it continually before us as the standard, the ideal, the aim, and although we may fail time and again, if we are rightly exercised in the matter we will be stronger as the result of every failure; for each failure will show us more clearly than we discerned previously the weak points of our characters, naturally resulting from the fall. And if each weak point be carefully noted and guarded against as respects the future we will come by and by, by the grace of God and under the direction of our great Teacher, by his Word and example, and providential leadings, to that subdued condition, that harmonized condition, which would accord to the expression of the text. And to such, looking back, even the failures which subsequently recognized led to greater fortification against the wiles of the Adversary and the weaknesses of the flesh, may be seen to have been overruled by the Lord for our blessing according to his promise that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

As we **finally**, in larger and larger measure, attain to harmony—to the subduing of our natural dispositions toward contention, gradually getting these combative tendencies into accord with the Lord and his Word and his Spirit, and into accord with those who are his, our fellow-soldiers in this battle for the right, our condition will be what the Apostle here describes; viz., we will have compassion one of another. We will expect to see and will see "the brethren" striving for the mastery over self and we will be sympathetic, compassionate; so that if they err through weakness of the flesh, we will be glad to restore such in the spirit of meekness, remembering ourselves also lest we should be tempted (Gal. 6:1). We will love them as brethren ought to love —heartily, thoroughly—such a love and such a sympathy, such a compassion, as would lead us to do everything within our power for their assistance; —especially along the lines of spiritual assistance, in the conquering of sin, and in growth in grace and knowledge and love;— but, nevertheless, also in temporal matters as we have opportunity, as may be possible to us.

This compassion and brotherly love amongst the spiritual brethren, even as respects temporal matters, cannot surely be less than it would be amongst natural brethren. Indeed, inasmuch as the spiritual relationship is the higher, the nobler, the grander of the two, without detracting anything from the love and affection and obligations toward the fleshly brotherhood, it would imply that the spiritual would appeal to us still more strongly, so that we would do all for a brother in Christ in a temporal way that we would do for any earthly brother—and more abundantly. The Apostle sets this standard, saying, that we are to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith."

This of course does not mean that we are to be negligent of those of our own immediate households and our special responsibilities to these; but it does mean that aside from these, the spiritual brethren should have the first place in our hearts and in our sympathies and in our love, and in all that this would imply in the way of sharing with them both the spiritual and the temporal good things which we enjoy, according to their necessities. Those who have reached this condition of heart-harmony with the Lord and with his gracious plan will have had such an experience in attaining to this position themselves that it will make them pitiful of others, —sympathetic in the difficulties and trials of others; and it will make them "courteous," polite, "gentle toward all."

In a word, according to the Scriptural standard, the elect Church of Christ should be the most polished, the most refined, the most polite, the most generous, the most kind, of all the people in the world;—and should be all these in the most absolute sense; not in the mere sense of an outward form and appearance of kindness, gentleness, etc., so common in the world; but a gentleness, a kindness, proceeding from the heart, proceeding from an appreciation of the Lord's spirit and the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love, and the spirit of justice, also. It is a great matter that we learn to be thoroughly just, and in all of our affairs to do unto others as we would wish them to do unto us,—that we accord them the same liberties that we ourselves would wish to enjoy. Truly, the law of God is a wonderful law, and truly the people who are taught of the Lord and trained in harmony with the divine will, must be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Combative people will always (while in the flesh) feel a disposition to retaliate; but those who have learned of the Lord the lesson of self-control, and who have developed meekness and brotherly-kindness and pity, will thereby be prepared to fulfil the demands of our text,—to not render evil for evil, or railing for railing. And looking to the Lord as the pattern they will see how it was with him, that "When he was reviled he reviled not again." Not because his enemies had found in him something that could properly and justly be reviled and evil spoken of;—nor because his enemies were so nearly perfect that he could find nothing in them to revile and speak evil of; but because he was so full of submission to the divine will that he was enabled to take the scoffs and railings of the people, and to bear these humbly and patiently, and to remember that **even hereunto he was called,** that he should endure patiently and learn the lessons, and prove himself faithful, and develop and demonstrate his true character, and feel and manifest his pity for the people, in their blindness and ignorance, and his love for them.

And so it must be with us as we grow in our Lord's character-likeness. We also will be less disposed to rail at those who rail, and to revile those who revile us. We also will be ready to suffer the loss of all things, and to do so with cheerfulness; yea, even to rejoice in the trials and difficulties of this present time, knowing, as the Apostle declares, that these are working out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. We note here the harmony between Peter's statement of this matter and our Lord's statement of it: "Bless them that curse you; bless and curse not" (Phil. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14). . . .

The Blessed Inheritance for Which We Are Being Prepared

We were called to be the Royal Priesthood, under Jesus, the Royal High Priest of our profession. We are instructed in the Scriptures that this royal priesthood is to be God's agency during the Millennial age for bringing blessing to the world of mankind, and "hereunto we were called" that we might be fitted for this priesthood. The Apostle tells us that in the preparation of our Lord Jesus and his testing as to fitness for the position of high priest, it was necessary that he should be tempted, tried, and caused to suffer, in order that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest when the time should come to exercise the authority and power of his office. Similarly it is necessary that all who would be of this Royal Priesthood should have such experiences now as would develop in them also these principles of truth, righteousness—such experiences as would lead them to love righteousness and to hate iniquity—such experiences in battling with self and in gaining control (at least so far as the mind, the will is concerned), as would constitute them victors and develop in them these graces of the spirit mentioned by the Apostle, brotherly kindness, pitifulness, compassion. All these qualities will be requisite in dealing with the world during the Millennial age. They will be merciful and faithful high priests, **because** they will know how to sympathize with the poor world in its fallen condition, and how to make allowances for them in their various efforts toward regaining the standard of perfection then to be established through restitution processes.

We will be kings as well as priests then. As kings, we will be endued with power to control the world. This will be a further proper use of combativeness; but we are not fitted and prepared to so control the world in the present time; and therefore the Lord directs his people to wait, and long for, and pray for his Kingdom to come, and his will to be done;—to be enforced with heavenly power and authority. These "very elect" kings and priests will be fully qualified to exercise their power in moderation, for then they will have the new bodies in perfect accord with the new minds;—the new minds which are now being developed, disciplined and brought to that standard of perfect love, which is full of pity, compassion, brotherly kindness and harmony. How necessary, dear brethren, that we learn these lessons, if we would be prepared to be used in the glorious service of the Kingdom so shortly to be established.—Z. '01:294-298.

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We are to **watch.** What should we watch? Preeminently we should watch **ourselves,** to keep ourselves from the snares of the present time, which are more insidious and entrapping than ever before, so that we do not endanger our peace with God nor lose our enlightenment. The Adversary is on the watch, and it is necessary that the Lord's people be especially alert and watchful.—Z. '15:55.

The Privilege and the Necessity of Prayer

"Let us . . . come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—rews 4:16.

PRAYER is a general term for all manner of petitions—whether a request, a hymn, or an expression of thanksgiving and praise. The ord **supplication** seems to carry with it the thought a continuous request, a repeated prayer, a longing esire, a waiting for the Lord to grant our petitions.

Well has the poet said.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed."

Access to Throne of Grace a Special Privilege

During the Gospel Dispensation, all who have ade full consecration to God may ask of Him as heir Father, may come boldly, confidently, to the hrone of Grace in prayer. Those who have not nade a consecration to God have no Advocate hrough whom to approach Him. Those who come n the spirit of prayer and with a real desire for hose blessings which God has promised to give, will see that prayer is a privilege restricted to a certain class. Those who do not esteem it a privilege may as well not come; for God has not as yet made any proposition to the world. Prayer is the privilege of God's children.

Cornelius was a man who sought harmony with od. Although he prayed for years and gave much lms, yet his prayers and alms did not come up efore God until an appropriate time—not until esus had died and ascended up on High, there to ppear in the presence of God for us. (Acts 10:1, 4; Heb. 9:24.) Three and a half years after the ross, at the end of the time of special favor to the ews, this man's prayers and alms came up before od as a memorial. But even then he must send en to Joppa to invite St. Peter to come to his me and instruct him how to receive the blessing God in Christ. When Cornelius accepted Christ, r Lord became his Advocate, and the Holy Spirit me upon him. Thereafter he had the privilege of ess to the Father at the Throne of Grace.

So it is with humanity today. There is but one y for any to avail himself of the privilege of yer. Each must recognize the fact that he is a ner, and that there is no access to God except ough Christ. In an earthly court, etiquette de-nds that one who desires to be presented to the g must first receive an invitation to appear in the g's presence, then at a set time he must appear, ssed in a certain kind of clothes. It is the same he Heavenly Court. No man can come to God ept through Christ Jesus. After he has accepted Lord as his Redeemer, and has offered himself onsecration, our Lord, as his Advocate, must r his imperfections with the Robe of His own hteousness, and present him to the Father. n he will be accepted and given the privilege rayer. . . .

During the Jewish Dispensation, the Jews had rivilege of approaching God in prayer; but during the Gospel Age they have not had this privilege. As long as the Atonement Day sacrifices were offered annually, they had the privilege of prayer under the Law Covenant; but as soon as the typical sin-offerings ceased, all those privileges which that Covenant secured for them terminated; therefore the Jews have no access to God. They are still under the Law Covenant; but they have lost this special feature of it, because the typical priesthood ceased to be recognized as soon as the Antitypical Priest appeared. . . .

Prayer an Opportunity and a Necessity

While prayer is a privilege and not a command, yet our condition makes it a necessity. Because of the fall of man from his original perfection, our flesh has imperfections, frailties; and yet we, as New Creatures, have responsibility for these weaknesses. The only way to discharge these responsibilities is to go to the Throne of Grace and there obtain help in time of need. Whoever, therefore, goes frequently to the Throne of Grace in prayer thus indicates that he recognizes the necessity of using the opportunity which God has provided in his interest and as his privilege.

Prayer is necessary to the well-being of any one who would properly enjoy the blessings and privileges of his organism. We have the organ of veneration, which appeals to us for the worship of God. If we decline this worship, ignorantly or wilfully, our best interests could not be served. In this respect, the majority of the world are not serving their best interests; but the Christian is so doing.

The person who does the proper amount of watching will have no difficulty in determining when he ought to pray. If he watches properly, he will continually see something about which to pray. If he foresees trouble and says, "Tomorrow morning I will pray about the matter," he is making a mistake. As soon as one has any thought or idea of a coming difficulty, he should make it the subject of prayer. "To him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Whoever seeks the Divine pleasing will find it.

The Lord's people are to watch in every direction. Our time is consecrated to the Lord, and it is our duty to watch that we render it to Him. If we consecrate our time to Him, and then waste it in reading novels and other worldly literature or in playing games, we are not using our time properly, although these practices are not sinful. Likewise we are to watch our own temptations, and to seek to control self and to guard against our own weaknesses, as well as those of others. We are also to watch the Word of the Lord, that we may be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Every trial, **every** temptation, is a **special** trial, a **special** temptation. No one knows whither the smallest temptation may lead. The Scriptures warn us to take heed; for what may seem a **small** matter may lead to something **great**. The fact that a thing may seem small does not imply that it may not be the most serious event of our whole life.

Those who have more opportunities for service are less liable to be led into temptation than are those who have fewer. We are, therefore, to be "not slothful in business"; but "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Rom. 12:11.) Watching against the world and its temptations, against our own flesh and its weaknesses, against the Adversary and his delusions—these duties will keep us busy enough.

We are also to watch the signs of the times. In our Lord's day He reproved some because they knew not the time of their visitation. His words were, "Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this **time?**" (Luke 12:56.) If we are too much engaged in work or in pleasure to have time to **study,** to **watch** properly, we find ourselves in difficulty.

Watching Unto Prayer Commended

It is one thing to be **tempted,** and quite another thing to **enter into** temptation. Our Lord was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet **without sin**"—He did not in any manner **give way** to the Tempter. So it should be with us. We are to resist the Devil and to watch and pray that we yield not to temptation. If we are negligent, if we think, "Oh, a little indulgence this once will not hurt us!" we are in danger. The only safe position for us to take is to watch and pray **continually,** for if we should **enter** temptation we know not where the matter may **end.** As some one has aptly said, "We cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, but we **can** prevent their nesting in our hair."

On the night in which our Lord was betrayed, St. Peter was amongst the most confident of the Apostles. He said to the Lord, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." (Matt. 26:33.) He did not know how much weakness was in him; therefore, when **the Lord** was **watching and praying** that momentous night, St. Peter was one of the first to **fall asleep!** Afterwards he was the very one to **deny** the Lord, and denied Him with **cursing!**

We recall our Lord's words to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke 22:31, 32.) St. Peter's very courage led him into a trap placed before him by the Adversary. This quality he showed when he went into the courtyard of the palace and mingled with those who were there. St. John, who accompanied him, was a relative of one of the priests; but St. Peter, who was recognized by his speech as a Galilean, was courageous enough to enter, even after having cut off the ear of one of the priest's servants.—John 18:15, 16.

Our Lord had foretold what would take place, saying, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." (Luke 22:34.) After this had happened on the night of the trial, St. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, "and went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:62.) Had he not done so, we know not what might have happened to him. The weeping showed that the denial was merely the result of weakness of the flesh.

St. Peter could have taken a wrong attitude. He could have said, "I had a right to stand up for my own life, and not to be implicated in this matter." Thus he might have gotten into a wrong condition of heart; but his crushing out of this evil inclination toward self-preservation proved that in spite of his thrice repeated denial he was at heart loyal to his Master. So it is also with us; he who resists the smallest temptation thereby strengthens his character that he may be able to withstand the greater ones.

A good story is told which illustrates the wisdom of not entering into temptation. A man who desired to hire a coachman had a number of applicants for the position. They were ushered into his office, and he asked them, "How near could you drive to the edge of a precipice without danger of accident?" One said he could drive within a foot without fear of falling over; another thought he could safely come within six inches of the edge; and so on. Finally, one man who had listened in silence to the others, said, "I do not know how near to the edge of the precipice I could safely drive; but I do know that I would keep as far away from it as I possibly could." This man was given the position.

This is the principle upon which we should act. The one who keeps the farthest away from temptation is on the safe side. Those who feel too confident of their own strength and power and go too near the danger line are liable to slip over the edge. Let us ever pray that we may not enter into temptation; let us also **watch** that we may keep out of danger.

Praying for Temporal Things

On His last evening with His Apostles, our Lord said to them, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24.) Undoubtedly there is a special blessing to those who look for a fulfilment of His promise. Our Lord said, on one occasion, that the Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. (Luke 11:13.) He did not mean that we must necessarily use the words, "Give us the Holy Spirit," or that we should pray for a Pentecostal blessing, as do some well-meaning friends; but that we should ask for the spirit of the Truth, of a sound mind, for the wisdom which comes from above.

We are not wise enough to guide our matters aright. We are instructed, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.) This wisdom seems to be especially necessary to us as the servants of God, that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable in the sight of the Lord.—Psa. 19:14.

Our Lord instructed His disciples, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matt. 6:31, 32.) His words seem to imply that we are to be different from the world. They would be ready to ask and pray for every iminable blessing—different kinds of food, houses, oney, and what not! They could not pray for iritual things; for they have no appreciation of ich gifts. Be not like them.

Why, then, did our Lord in His prayer say, Give us this day our daily bread"? This is a very ifferent matter from specialization in prayer. The .ord has promised that, if we are faithful, our bread nd water shall be sure. (Isa. 33:16.) We shall not e neglected. It is very proper that we acknowledge he Lord as the Giver of all good. According to His romise, we look to Him to give us food and aiment. Whatever we have, we acknowledge our lependence upon the Lord for what He provides or us; and we ask for nothing beyond what He does provide.

The more we advance in spiritual development, the less we feel like dictating to the Lord and the greater confidence we have in His wisdom and the more faith in His promises. The most that we should do is to make mention to Him of those promises for temporal provision and of our trust in them. Of one thing we may be sure—that the Lord, who has called us to be His followers, has us under His supervision, and will see to it that all things shall work together for our good. . . .

Those around whom the Angel of the Lord encampeth (Psa. 34:7), may be said to have a charmed life. The Lord is directing His Church. Therefore, think you that He will permit loss of life through accident or illness before we have had time to comply with the terms of His invitation? Surely not! Therefore, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) We are trusting in the promses of God. He will accomplish His Divine purpose n us, if we abide in Him and His Word abides in s, and if we are faithful in obedience.

The Editor does not recall having from childood asked the Lord for physical strength or health. Ie has known times when his physical strength was ot great and when there were opportunities for rvice which seemed to require more strength than e had. Then he has taken pleasure in going before e Lord in prayer and saying that he was trusting at the necessary strength and all else which the ord saw best to give him would be provided; but at if the Lord saw best that he should not be able make a satisfactory presentation, he would still his part and leave the rest with the Lord, knowthat whatever the Lord permitted would be the t experience for him.

This course has always been sufficient. In forty ars of active service, he has never missed a meetbecause of lack of strength, although there have n times when his friends have said, "You cannot sibly speak tonight!" His reply invariably has n, "If the Lord gives me strength, I will go to meeting place, and will trust Him for strength speak." At one time he almost fainted on the form; but grace sufficient has always been his tion. So long as he remains on this side of the he intends to speak whenever he has an oppory, unless he is unable to do so. He is sure that Lord gives him the opportunity to speak, He also furnish the needed strength.

Proper Subjects for Prayer

When we recall that St. James said of some o his day, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye a amiss" (James 4:3), we feel that we should be careful what we ask for. Our Lord instructed His Apostles that it is very important to abide in Hi and to see that His words abide in us, if we woul have our prayers answered. His words are, "If y abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shal ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7.) In other words, petitions according t the Lord's will shall be answered, but those contrary to His will shall remain unanswered.

To ask selfishly for the things of the earth would not be true prayer. Many Christians have a mandatory way of telling the Lord what they would like to have Him do for them. . . . Our prayers should be along higher lines. Temporalities should be presented in a casual way. We should have the desire to subsist in such a manner as would be pleasing t the Lord and should be thankful for whatever His providence may give us—whether much or little.

It has been suggested that to pray for anything which God is **willing to give** is entirely proper. We may pray for the Holy Spirit, for more love, more gentleness, more patience, more wisdom from on High. We may pray that all these things will work together for our good; for He has promised that this shall be. We may pray for guidance from the Lord as may be best in His sight. But we may not **tell Him what to do**; for we have no means of knowing what is His will in matters in general.

Our Lord did not pray in a mandatory fashion. With His petitions, He said, "Not **My** will, but **Thine**, be done"—I have no will of My own; for I have given up My will and I desire to have Thy will done. This is a prayer of full submission. It did not mean that our Lord did not pray in faith, nor that He would not get what He desired. It meant that He desired to learn the Father's will; and He learned that the Father willed that He should drink the cup of suffering to the very dregs.

If we are submissive, our prayers will become more and more messages of thanksgiving. We shall increasingly desire to walk in the Master's footsteps. We shall desire that His will be done in us rather than anything that we could attempt to tell Him. Everything will be according to His Plan, which will come to pass, and which He will not alter for us nor for anyone else in the world. . . .

There is a great blessing in store for all those who delight their hearts in the way of the Lord. We are in line with His gracious promises. We are waiting and praying. By and by, the Lord says, He will avenge His own Elect. He will deliver them from all the opposition of the flesh and of the Adversary. He will set them on High and pour them out a blessing such as He has promised. Then the prayers will be answered. Meantime, the prayers continue to go up, earnestly, trustfully.

There is a difference between "saying one's prayers" and **praying**. In prayer, we should have some definite request before our minds, in order that we may look intelligently for an answer. A brother, who was carefully scrutinizing his thoughts, words and doings, with a view to discovering what trait of character most needed upbuilding, concluded that he needed **patience.** Sometime after, he wrote, "I have been wondering what is the matter. I have been praying for more patience; but my trials are of such a character that my patience is actually growing less. But lately I begin to see that the Lord is answering my prayer for patience in this very way, and is permitting these trials for the very purpose of developing this trait of character in me."

This experience is in line with the Apostle's injunction, "Take unto you the whole armor of God." (Eph. 6:13.) Whatever our prayer may be, we should watch to see in what manner the Lord is answering our petitions. This attitude on our part will demonstrate our faith, trust and loyalty. In turn our faith will be **strengthened.** Thus shall we be pleasing to the Lord because of our confidence in Him. He knows the way that we take better than do we ourselves. Then if something which we had not been anticipating should come into our lives, we should think, "Here is a lesson for us to learn—of patience, of obedience."

It is the privilege of the Lord's people to **ask,** in order that they may have fulness of joy. We have this joy and the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and we rejoice greatly in hope of the glorious things which the Father has in store for us and which the Holy Spirit reveals through the Word. The joyful Christian is the thankful Christian. The thankful Christian is the one who is making the best use of his life. By reason of having exercised thankfulness of heart, he will be the better prepared for the Kingdom. Those less thankful may attain the Kingdom, for aught we know. But the thankless heart will not get the Kingdom. . . .

We have many reasons for giving thanks—the heart that gives thanks will find itself more and more in a thankful attitude. At first when we begin to give thanks, we do so for the more pleasant things; but as our experience increases, we find joy in the afflictions and the persecutions of life; for these experiences refine our hearts and make them more susceptible to the right as against the wrong—the Truth as against the error, the purity as against the impurity.

Not only should we pray frequently and with regularity, but we should be always in the attitude of prayer. The children of God should be in that attitude of heart which looks to the Lord for Divine guidance in every perplexity and every experience. Just as the needle turns to the pole, so our hearts should turn to the Lord. If there is pain or trouble or difficulty in our pathway, we should look to Him. If there is privilege of serving the Lord, we should not think ourselves competent for the service without turning to the Lord for help. In other words, the Christian's prayer should ascend not only in the beginning of the day; the atmosphere of prayer should surround him continually. It should not be a mere sense of duty, but an appreciation of a great privilege.

Those who appreciate the Lord at all could not afford to be without this privilege. Those who do appreciate this privilege rejoice to go to the Heavenly Father many times a day. Our advice to all who are seeking to walk the narrow way, would be that they forget not this privilege. But in their families or in their rooms with their roommate, the prayer should be in such a form as would be reasonable and proper, according to what would be their best judgment of pleasing the Lord—and not to be an intrusion in any sense.

Faith Strengthened by Prayer

As to just how the prayers of one may benefit another we may not know. We have not sufficient information to philosophize on it very deeply. We might surmise certain mental influences proceeding from one to another, just as we know electrical influences to proceed from one station to another thousands of miles away. The powers of the mind are something not comprehended. We can influence ourselves, and, to a certain extent, influence another. One mind can influence another without a word, by some telepathic power. As to why God permits this and gives blessings in answer to prayer we cannot say. We are left to philosophize, to speculate.

If we are in the School of Christ, we are there to be taught, to learn certain lessons of life. One of the lessons is to have full, perfect faith in God—absolute trust. Such a trust is exercised by our prayers for ourselves as well as for others; and this trust is cultivated by our prayers. God is pleased to bless these prayers, and thus to cultivate and strengthen our faith. We cannot suppose that God would leave any important work undone if we failed to pray for it, or that the answer to our prayer would come as we look for it; but blessings may come from one channel or another. God is quite able to overrule any matter so that He can give blessings, either by our co-operation and prayers, or without our co-operation and prayers.

We have reason to believe that when we pray for others our prayers avail. We have known instances where prayers have been answered very remarkably. The Lord's Word seems to inculcate this faith in us. God's people **have been** people of prayer, and **are** people of prayer. We cannot imagine how one could be a consistent follower of Christ without prayer.—Z. '13:83-88.

◆

As the faithful and successful course of the Apostle Paul was a worthy and safe example to the Church, so likewise should each disciple of Christ in turn consider that his example will have its influence upon others. Every Christian should strive to be a pattern worthy of imitation—a pattern of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy Christ in his daily life, and of active zeal in his service. Patterns of perfection, of the ultimate moral glory and beauty of holiness, we cannot expect to be in the present life. Such a pattern we have only in Christ our Lord. In no such sense did Paul ever say, Follow me, or Follow us; but he did say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—1 Cor. 11:1. The Apostle was a grand example of earnest endeavor to attain perfection, but not of the ultimate perfection which was in Christ only; and it is his zeal and intense earnestness in striving to copy Christ and to accomplish his will that we should imitate.—Z. '95:251.

The Peace of God

'The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep r hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Great peace e they which love Thy Law: and nothing shall offend them." hil. 4:7; Psa. 119:165.

OD'S LAW represents God's will. All who are right minded, rightly disposed, will rejoice in having God's will well done. Origally, God's will was written in man's nature. After sin had effaced it there, God wrote it upon bles of stone for Israel. It is the righteousness of is Law that Christians obey (the Divine regulaons, the Divine requirements, whatever they may e) so far as possible. We delight to do God's will.

To love God's Law, then, would be to appreciate he fact that God has a great purpose: to take deight in finding out what God's will is; and to have ull confidence in His Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. Great peace have all those who so do. hey do not understand every dealing of Divine ustice, but their faith holds to the fact that He is oo wise to err. Thus they have peace in confiding heir interests to Him.

In this text the Apostle differentiates between he mind and the heart. The heart represents the ffections. The Apostle urges not only that we hould have good feelings in the matter, but that our ninds should be at rest. If after we have made a onsecration of ourselves to the Lord we should do omething to violate our conscience in some respect, ve would feel estranged from Him. Then our earts should know that we might draw near to the ord again; and we should endeavor by prayer to et back into harmony with God and thus to effect reconciliation. Our Lord has made provision on ur behalf, that we should have an Advocate with e Father. (1 John 2:1.) He who appeared in e presence of God for us at first is the same One ho ever liveth to make intercession for us. So we me to the Lord through the arrangement which e has made; and we rejoice that we may obtain giveness and grace to help in time of need.

The text does not refer to our own peace, but the peace of God, the peace which comes to us through a realization of God's power, of His goodness and willingness to hold us by His right hand as His children. This peace stands guard continually, as a sentinel, to challenge every hostile or worrying thought or fear. It so keeps the Christian's mind that he at heart has peace with the Lord, fellowship, communion; and it guards his mind also, his reasoning faculties, instructing him and assuring him respecting the Divine power, wisdom and love.

We should make request increasingly for grace and wisdom and the fruits of the Spirit, for opportunities for serving the Lord and the brethren, and for growing more and more into the likeness of God's dear Son. Under these conditions the promised "peace which passeth all understanding" will guard our hearts and our thoughts. Selfishness and ambition would find little room in hearts so filled. Even when in "deep waters" Divine peace can dwell in our hearts and keep them.

The Apostle's thought seems to be that those whom he addresses have come into harmony with God through acceptance of His terms. Turning from all opposition, they have become the children of God through faith, obedience, self-sacrifice and consecration to death. The Apostle urges that God's peace should be in these and should continue. They should be guarded by that peace. The expression, "through Christ Jesus," suggests that, as we entered into this peace through our great Advocate, so we can continue in this peace only by His continuing to be our Advocate; otherwise, through imperfections of the flesh, we would get out of harmony continually.

"Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.) Thus as we come daily and say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," we abide in the peace; for we have this great Advocate. Therefore, this peace abides—a continuing supply of grace through the great Advocate.—Z. '11:397.

"Your Father Knoweth"

Matthew 6:8.

Our Father knows what things we need,
Each step along the way;
His eye of love doth never sleep—
He watches night and day.

He knows sometimes, like ripening grain,
We need the sunshine bright;
Again, he sends the peace that comes
With shadows of the night.

Sometimes our pride would fain unfurl
Ambition's flaunting sail,—
Ah! then he knows we need to walk
Humiliation's vale.

Sometimes he takes our eager hands
And folds them on our breast,
He gently lays our work aside—
He knows we need to rest.

Sometimes we need companionship,
Sometimes "the wilderness";
How sweet to feel he'll know and give
The state that most will bless.

Then let us leave it all with him,
Assured that, come what may,
Our Father knows just what we need,
Upon our pilgrim way.—Z. '07:203.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

It must always be that earnest effort accompany prayer. Prayers not accompanied by efforts brand themselves as insincere. The prayer which is not of faith is sin—unscriptural, sacrilegious.—Z. '11:411.

◆

To fancy ourselves as making spiritual progress merely by gaining information respecting the Lord, his miracles, his teachings, etc., is to get the nut and crack it and drop the kernel, the thing of real value. —Z. '00:271.

◆

The Good Shepherd will always be represented amongst the sheep by those who have his own characteristics, and who are seeking to walk in his footsteps; and through these he will utter his "voice," and lead his own sheep to pasture and to rest. These will not only have the same voice, the same Word, the same good tidings, but they will have the same devotion to the interests of the sheep—to feed the sheep, to lead them into the green pastures and by the still waters of present Truth.—Z. '00:232.

◆

"Ye are not your own." Your time, your talent, your influence, your money, all that you consider precious or in any degree valuable, all properly belongs to God. It was not only his by right, in that it originally was his creation, because all that we have that is valuable in any sense of the word, has come from the heavenly Father; but now it is his in a second sense, in the sense that he has redeemed or bought it back from the destruction to which by sin our first parent delivered it.—Z. '97:34.

◆

God lays great stress upon loyal and loving **obedience** on the part of all his children. It was only a little matter of disobedience that cost Adam and his posterity so dearly; and that will bring similar results to all those who, having once escaped the condemnation of death through faith in Christ the Redeemer, thereafter refuse to stand before God in the robe of his righteousness, but prefer to appear in their own. All such were appointed to stumble; but blessed are the meek, for they shall **stand.** "The Lord knoweth them that are his."—Z. '93:252.

◆

If you have consecrated all your time, all your talents, to the Lord, the question is, How much of it are you giving? Are you still willing, according to your covenant of consecration, to give up **all?** —B.S.M. Vol. 6:1:3.

◆

We can fancy the sympathy which St. Paul's affliction called forth among the loving brethren. "I bear you witness, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."—Gal. 4:15.

The Apostle as a chosen vessel was to have a very conspicuous part in the Divine programme, in the introduction of the Gospel, and his own humility was a very essential matter. Doubtless the Lord foresaw that this remnant of his eye trouble would ever keep him in remembrance of the great blunder he made in his zeal without knowledge, and of the Lord's mercy to him. These thoughts would doubtless keep him humble and trustful and probably provide a great blessing to him, even though he entreated for its removal, until the Lord indicated otherwise, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Cor. 12:9.) Ah, says the Apostle, **if having this affliction means more Divine grace, then I am content to keep it and would be sorry to part with it.** Let us, dear friends, view our trials, persecutions, difficulties, thus—as of Divine permission for our good. Let us be assured that he who has accepted us in the bonds of love and who has begotten us with his spirit and called us sons, is not unmindful of our highest interests and would not suffer us to be tried and tempted except as he would make all such experiences work out harmoniously to our highest welfare.—Z. '09:86.

◆

Let us hold fast to the precious promises. If others lose their hold and claim that they can no longer see with us, our pity should be for them that the light that they had has gone from them. Let us not smite the blind, but rather be kind and generous toward all. The greater the number of the blind, the greater is the blessing and privilege of those who do see. Let us rejoice in our privileges and use them. Let us remember the Master's words, "If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness." Such are in a more pitiable condition than the world who never saw. Let us remember, too, that all kinds of blindness are more or less contagious and let us guard our spiritual sight as one of the most precious boons given of the Lord.—Z. '09:205.

◆

We have been invited to be Joint-Heirs with Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom and properly required to be "more than conquerors"—**loyal in the very highest degree, in thought and word and deed.** The testing of such for so high a position in the Divine purpose justifies most crucial tests. The way of the called, chosen, faithful, elect, has been narrow; few have found it and still fewer have had the faith and courage and patience to walk therein to the end of life's journey.—Z. '09:38.

◆

Our hands and all their doings, our feet and all their goings, our eyes and all their visions, our tongues and all their words, are to be dead to Sin, dead to selfishness, dead to everything except the new mind, the Holy Spirit, which, controlling these, is to use them daily, hourly, **incessantly,** in the service of God, the service of Christ, the service of the brethren, the service of the Truth.—B.S.M. Vol. 7:4.

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The Angel of Gethsemane

as midnight. and the Man of Sorrows took his chosen three.
d sought with weary step the shelter of Gethsemane
pray. his soul exceeding sorrowful. e'en unto death.
id heavy laden with the sin and woe of all the world.
agony of bloody sweat he fell upon his face.
nd cried. with tears. "My God. my Father. if it be thy will.
h. let this cup of shame and numbering with transgressors pass.—
it be possible! Yet. not my will. but thine be done!"
nd then his thoughts turned to the sacrifice.—a fear bore down
ith agonizing weight upon his heart. lest to comply
ith every jot and tittle of the Law. he might have **failed!**
e saw the priestly type. he knew eternal death awaited.
hould he seek to pass the second vail unworthily.
ternal death! Oh. anguish inexpressible.—to see
o more his Father's face! He sought his well-beloved three.
erchance they might refresh his fainting heart with some sure word
f prophecy. Alas. their eyes were heavy and they slept.
hree times he sought them. and three times **in vain!** Yet he was heard
that he feared. The Father sent a **heavenly** comforter
touch with tender. strengthening hand that dear, devoted head.
d whisper. "'I the Lord in righteousness have called thee. I
ill hold thine hand and keep thee. neither shalt thou **fail** nor be
Discouraged.' Lo. thou art 'a priest **forever.** and king
Upon thy throne. like to Melchizidek.' And the shalt see
The travail of thy soul. and shalt be satisfied." Hi heart
Revived. he knew his Father's faithful word coul never fail:
He knew it would accomplish that whereunto it wa sent.
He rose. and from that hour went forth to trial an to death.
In peace.—a calmness born of perfect confidence i God.

How oft. throughout the many-centuried "night" o this dark age.
The Father's "little ones" have knelt in sad Gethsemane
To pray! E'en now the Garden's shade re-echoe with the cry
Of God's elect. "**How long,** oh Lord. how long unti we see
The travail of our soul? How long until thou shal avenge
Thine own elect. who cry to thee. with tears. both night and day?"

* * * *

Dear Lord. oh. use **me** as the angel in Gethsemane!
Oh. fill me with thy holy Spirit of divinest love!
Oh. make me sympathetic. **wise,** that every anguished heart
May come. nor seek in vain for consolation from thy Word.
And strengthened. comforted. go forth to prison and to death.
To suffer patiently the cruel mockings of the tongue;
To bear the cross unto the bitter end. then calmly say.
"'Tis finished." and **with faith unwavering** pass **beneath "the vail!"**—Z. '06:167.

"A Token of My Covenant"

What shall I render unto Thee?
What praise sufficient could there be
For all Thy benefits toward me.
O Thou Most High?

I'll drink Salvation's cup today
Which Thou hast poured. Be Thou my stay!
Assist me as Thy saint to pay
My Vows to Thee.

Remembering Thy Heavenly call,
I'll strive to be sincere to all.
I pray for grace lest I should fall
From simple Truth.

In thought, in word, in all my ways
Thy holy standard I would raise,
Nor please. nor honor self. but praise
My Worthy King.

Today in matters small or great,
I'll serve with faithfulness and wait
For further joys. Oh. blessed state,
Thus serving Thee!

I'll strive to "choose things that excel;"
All anxious care I'll seek to quell,
And all discouragements repel,
And be content.

I'll neither murmur nor repine!
I'll trust my heart to care Divine
To make of it a sacred shrine
Where Thou canst dwell.

—Z. '16;

JH Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 103

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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A Lesson on Divine Providence

Exodus 2:1-15.

Golden Text:—"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."—Acts 7:22.

OF the greatness of Moses the renowned Gladstone said:—

"We have in the history of Moses a great and powerful genius, an organizing, constructing mind. Moses belongs to the great class of nation-makers; to a class of men who have a place by themselves in the history of politics, and who are among the rarest and highest of the phenomena of our race."

Another says:—

"He was great as a lawmaker and organizer, a general, a historian, a poet, an orator, and a saint who walked with God. It is not too much to say that our modern civilization is built upon his work. And his greatness is enhanced enormously when we remember that his only material was a disorganized horde of emancipated slaves, encamped in a desert. Probably the majority of thinkers would rate Moses as the greatest man of earliest history."

Foreordained of God a Leader

The proper view of Moses' career must surely take into account that he was a special servant of God and under special divine providence. While this view may not commend itself to the world, it surely does increase the interest of all who are in heart accord with the teachings of the divine Word. We shall see that all of the Lord's providences regulated the affairs of this wonderful man from his earliest infancy; and some of us may see still further that there was an interposition of divine providence in respect to the development of the babe even before its birth. Saint Paul, who was another of those remarkable characters whose interests were superintended by divine power, said of himself that the Lord "called me from my mother's womb." The inference we draw from this statement is that the Apostle recognized that certain traits of character and disposition were his from the moment of his birth—traits and dispositions which specially prepared him for his subsequent work as a minister of the Gospel. Applying this principle to Moses, we may well attribute much of the fineness and breadth of character and the extreme humility of this "meekest man in all the earth" to prenatal influences.

He was born so: God had him in mind as a suitable one for his purposes, and equipped him with those qualities so necessary to one whom he would so largely use in so great a work as the deliverance of his people from the bondage of Egypt. Nothing in this implies a divine interference with free moral agency. As it was possible for the Apostle Paul to have declined to preach the Gospel, and even to have repudiated the Lord and be a "castaway," so also it was possible for Moses to have repudiated his mission and to have chosen the pleasures of sin for a season. Had either of these men taken the wrong course we may be sure that the divine plan would not have been interfered with, so diverse is the wisdom and power of God. Another could have been raised up to do the work of the Apostle or the work of Moses, and divine providence could have so arranged for their instruction and development that the divine plan would have suffered no loss. Nevertheless, so complete, we may be sure, were the arrangements of God in respect to Saint Paul and Moses, that it was more natural for them to take the course which they chose than to have taken the opposite one.

Hidden in the Bulrushes

As we begin to look for divine providence in the affairs of Moses we find them standing out at every juncture. He was born at that particular time when Pharaoh Rameses II. had laid commands upon all the Hebrew parents that their male children should be promptly strangled at the time of birth, under dire penalties upon themselves and the child they would permit to live. We know not how long this law remained in effect, but it served in this particular juncture to introduce Moses into the royal family by a most remarkable chain of circumstances. Miriam, his sister, was born about nine years before, and Aaron, his brother, in time to escape this law; and when Moses was born his mother "saw that he was a goodly child, and hid him three months." Apparently there was something extraordinary in the appearance of the child, not only in the eyes of its own parents but also in those of the princess who subsequently adopted him. Stephen says of him, "He was exceeding fair,"—margin, "fair to God." (Acts 7:20)—and Josephus recounts that as a man he was so handsome that passers-by would turn to gaze after him, and even laborers forgot their tasks in the spell of his rare beauty.

To hide the child for three months must have been quite a task, especially when the law respecting infants was known and probably a reward offered for the detection of those evading it. At last it was necessary for the mother to part with the babe, and the ark or basket made of bulrushes was prepared and overspread on the outside with pitch to keep it dry. With the babe therein it was placed near the bank of the river amongst the rushes, which would prevent it from floating down the stream and hide it from the curious. The spot was selected, too, somewhere near the royal palace, and near that portion of the river set apart for bathing for the use of the royal family, and at a time when the princess was known to take her daily bath. The location was on the river Nile. Rawlinson says:—

"The capital of Egypt, the abode of the royal family at that time, was most probably Memphis, occupying nearly the site on which now stands the great city of Cairo. The household of Amram dwelt under the shadow of the three great pyramids, those 'artificial mountains,' the most impressive monuments that have ever been raised by human hands."

Brought Forth—From the Water

In harmony with the expectation Pharaoh's daughter took her usual bath on the day in which Moses was placed in the ark amongst the rushes, and at an opportune moment the babe cried. The princess is said to have been a married woman but childless, and we may well imagine the interest and curiosity aroused in her heart and the hearts of her maidens in attendance when the cry of the babe was heard. An attendant brought the ark and opened it before the princess, and the weeping babe excited the compassion of the womanly heart. At once she guessed the truth, that this must be a Hebrew child, whose parents, unwilling to strangle it, had disposed of it in this manner, perhaps in hope.

Watching at a distance, little Miriam, Moses' sister, then about nine years of age, following her instructions, ran to see the find and to promptly propose to the princess that she might get one of the Hebrew women to act as a nurse for the child. This was approved, and of course Miriam called the mother. The princess gave direction that the nurse should take full charge of him and receive pay for so doing. Thus the family fortunes were helped, and at the same time full protection assured, for the child was recognized as the adopted son of the princess. It is supposed that about seven years elapsed before Moses was brought to the princess, and that meantime he enjoyed the care and instruction of a godly mother. Meantime, we know not just when, the princess gave the child the name Moses, which signifies, "delivered from the water." Some translate the word to mean, "born from the water," supposing that the princess probably meant by this to signify that she had borne Moses as her son, borne him from the water.

To those who have eyes of faith to see it, there is a great chain of providential circumstances here; to others, who have no such eyes, these were merely accidents and happen-sos. Each one of course will be strongly convinced of the correctness of his own view, but in this case as in many others truth is stranger than fiction, and all these things were, under divine providence, working together for the accomplishment of the divine purpose in connection with that child, with that man, and with the nation which God intended he should subsequently lead out of bondage as the typical people of God. Dean Alford expresses this thought beautifully in the words,—

"The bark is wafted to the strand by breath divine,
And on the helm there rests another hand than
mine."

"Mighty in Word and Deed"

Our Golden Text from Stephen's discourse reminds us that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds." What a wonderful preparation that wonderful boy needed in order to make of him the great Captain of the Lord's hosts. Egypt at that time had two great universities, one at Heliopolis, the other at Hermopolis. Moses is said to have been instructed in the former, situated about twenty miles north of Memphis. Giekie describing it says: "Shady cloisters opened into lecture rooms for the students and quiet houses for the professors and priests, in their many grades and offices." Another writer says: "A splendid library was at his disposal. The library of the Rameseum at Thebes—a structure built by Rameses II.—contained 20,000 books.

It seems almost a miracle that the boy Moses could pass through such experiences as he had in the palace and in the school without being seriously injured by the vain philosophies prevailing and honored in these places. Evidently, however, he was not only well born as respected his religious instincts, but the influence of his mother, his nurse, undoubtedly had much to do with shaping his child mind and holding him firm in the faith of the Hebrew—the faith in the Oath-Bound Abrahamic Covenant, to the effect that his race at some time would be blessed by the Lord and made very great, influential in the world, and thus be the divine channel for the blessing of all the families of the earth. At all events we have every indication that Moses was not only not spoiled by his education, in the sense of having his faith overthrown, but that his natural modesty, humility, meekness, continued with him to manhood's estate.

When Moses Was Grown

This date according to the Scriptures was his fortieth year, for the life of Moses was divided into three distinct parts of forty years each. An eminent writer says, "According to Josephus, the Ethiopians made an incursion into Egypt and routed the army that was sent to resist them. Panic spread over the country, and Pharaoh trembled at the approach of the swarthy savages. The Oracles, well aware of his remarkable abilities, advised that the command be entrusted to Moses. He immediately took the field, surprised the enemy, defeated them with heavy slaughter, drove them back into their own territory and followed them up so hard, capturing one city after another, that they found no asylum until they reached the swamp-girdled city of Meroe. Moses is said to have returned from this campaign the most popular man in the kingdom, having also learned thoroughly the weakness and strength of the people and of Pharaoh."

Moses the Patriot

The favor enjoyed as the adopted son of the princess in the palace and throughout the land did not quench the sympathy and patriotism of Moses' heart. He perceived the injustice heaped upon his brethren, and in his sympathy for one of them he smote a taskmaster so that he killed him. He buried him in the sand, thinking that nothing further would come of this, that his brethren the Hebrews would be helped to that extent, and that they would surely keep the secret of his favor and defence. In this, however, he found himself mistaken, for when endeavoring to correct a dispute between two Hebrews the fact that he was the murderer of an Egyptian was flung in his face by the one who was at fault. Soon the word reached everywhere, even to the king, who began quietly, as the Hebrew word signifies, to seek an opportunity for slaying Moses—not so easy a matter, however, as the latter was very popular: but in fear Moses, beginning the second fortieth year of his life, fled into the land of Midian, where he remained for forty years, returning for the deliverance of his people when he was eighty years of age.

We cannot say as some might that each child, each youth, each man, by giving attention to the divine guidance, might become a Moses. Very few are prepared by nature and providence for so exalted a position, and generally there are comparatively few opportunities for them. Israel did not need more than one Moses. We can, however, say that divine providence has a general charge of all the affairs of his people. If it is not in our province to be a Moses, it is a part of the Lord's providence to be one of his people, to be cared for by the Lord through a Moses, through a Deliverer. We cannot all be reared in palaces and educated in great institutions of learning nor become mighty in word and deed, but we should each look for the leadings of divine providence in our own experiences and be glad to fill any position marked out to us therein, assured that,—

"God's providence is kind and large;
  Both man and beast his bounty share.
The whole creation is his charge,
  But saints are his peculiar care."

But while we cannot occupy so prominent a place in earthly affairs as did Moses, let us look to the divine providences in the affairs of our lives, and let us note that still greater privileges, opportunities and honors are ours through Christ.

If the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter was a remarkable matter, much more wonderful is our own experience in that God first of all redeemed us by the precious blood of Christ, and then without our consent and upon our consecration adopted us into his family as the Bride of his Son, to be "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." (Rom. 8:17.) There is nothing in all the novels and romances in the world that in any degree compares with the marvels of this glorious grace of God bestowed upon consecrated believers of the Gospel age. Do we really believe it? So surely as we do the effect will manifested in our words and thoughts and doin Imagine a young peasant woman invited to becom the bride of a king of a prominent earthly thron would not the thought of her espousal and the coming honors and blessings and privileges fill her hea almost to the exclusion of every other subject Would not the preparation for the wedding day b to her and to her friends the all-absorbing topic interest, engaging time, talent, influence, attention in every sense of the word? And yet all this wou be to a view of an earthly honor that might be ver fleeting, with a prospect of earthly happiness; or i might prove bitterly disappointing, and at the ver most, and considered from the most advantageou standpoint, could only be a blessing for a few year

7 Compare this with the glorious prospects that are set before the Lord's espoused virgin Church—glory, honor, immortality, eternal life with him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood and with the Father. Truly those who really believe this message, who recognize of a truth that they have been begotten to the new nature and have received the spirit of espousal—surely these could have no greater power and influence operate in their lives to sanctify them and separate them from the world, and to bring them into close fellowship of spirit with their Redeemer. Another thought: As Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and proved himself mighty in words and deeds, so those whom the Lord is now selecting for joint-heirship in the kingdom of his dear Son are required to learn lessons in the great school of experience, in the school of Christ, and they are required to manifest character and be overcomers—strong in the Lord and in the power of his might—mighty in words and in deeds for the Lord and for the Truth. And thank God, however humble our speech, or insignificant our station, he is reckoning these matters to us according to our attitude of heart; and the smallest word or act done through loyalty to him and to principles of righteousness is counted as mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of error, and to the establishment ultimately of the Kingdom of God under the whole heaven.—Z. '07:137-140.

The Ministry of Sorrow

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"—Psalm 130:1; Job 34:29.

THE life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depths of sorrow. These make up a large part of the warp and the woof of experience; and the web of character which flows from the active loom of life, will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the somber shades predominate; and to such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," says the Apostle. The children of God are no exception to this universal rule; we also "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our Body"—our company, the Body of Christ.—Romans 8:22, 23.

But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial bear to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increases or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of earth! But when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. He must fight the tendencies of his old nature and must confidently claim and expect the victory, in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must he sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. He must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden him or make him bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may he allow pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence has given him to prove his faithfulness as a steward.

Depth of Sorrow Lead to Heights of Joy

Sorrow and griefs may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our Stay and Strength in every experience which He permits. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" (Vs. 1, 2.) Feeling his own weaknesses and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the Divine Plan of Salvation through Christ, he adds, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities [imputing them to us], O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared [reverenced].—Vs. 3, 4.

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merits of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is our glorious dress, arrayed in which we may come to God with humble boldness, courage—even into the presence of the great Jehovah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If thus God ignores the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, which each humbly confesses, and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavoring to overcome by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the Apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? Shall that God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died?" (Romans 8:31, 33, 34—Diaglott.) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are **cultivated**, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are justified, in order that the faults may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily "judge ourselves," and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will Himself judge and chasten us.—1 Cor. 11:31, 32.

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to **wait** patiently for the Lord to outwork the issues of our experiences in His own good way. How **necessary** is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." (Psalm 130:5, 6.) In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that "He **knows,** and **loves,** and **cares,**" and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be **too severe.** The dear Master is standing by the crucible, and the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense that the precious gold of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering.

The Reward of Patient Waiting

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm 37:5-7.) We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as New Creatures; and we would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice." (1 Peter 4:12, 13.) He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abiding care! "When **He** giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief, a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly gnorance. None but the true child of God can w it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who e never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, o have never put yourselves wholly into the nds of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into s glorious likeness, who have never made an rnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of ur own fallen nature, who have never contended rnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst a crooked and perverse generation, what can you now of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It s the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits n the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by he relentless foe.. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for Truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the saint of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

"Ye Have Seen the Patience of Job"

The saints of every Age have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes"; and again, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word." (Psalm 119:67, 71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore xperiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all is children, whom he loved, then of the love and oyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with re disease—boils, from head to foot. To crown ll, three of his friends came to see him on hearing his great trials; and instead of being true comrters, they added to his sorrows by insisting that own sins must have been the cause of all these asters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may."

Preciousness of Intimate Fellowship With God

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unfailing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and Truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light—clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage." Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfilment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?—
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!"
—Z. '15: 344-346.

Sobriety, Vigilance, Steadfastness

1 Pet. 5: 8, 9.

WHAT more appropriate watchwords than these could express the proper attitude of the Christian soldier?—"Be **sober**, be **vigilant**; because your Adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom **resist, steadfast in the faith,** knowing that the same afflictions are endured by your brotherhood in the world."

The "brotherhood" includes all the soldiers of Christ throughout the world, and this symbol of their present character is not a mere empty sound; for there is a mighty conflict in progress, a war being waged, and the encounter is one of desperate earnestness. Those who know nothing of this great conflict, and who have no part in it, though they may bear the name of Christ—Christians—really have no right to that name; for they are not Christ's soldiers. Jesus himself was a soldier, and fought the battle through to the bitter end, and gained the victory. And he is the Captain of all those who accept the redemption he purchased and that follow in his footsteps, and he will lead them on to certain victory, if they faint not.—Gal. 6: 9.

The Apostle Paul gives the same idea of the Christian life. He represents it as a desperate warfare, and urges all the true soldiers of Christ to "put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil; for," says he, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. . . . Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness," etc.—Eph. 6:10-18.

When we consider how strongly our adversary is intrenched in the world—in its ideas, its maxims, its institutions, its policy, its hopes, aims and ambitions—and the Christian life as in direct opposition to all these; and when we further consider how, because we were once partakers of the spirit of the world, the enemy of our souls has strongly intrenched himself in our weak fallen natures; and still further, how, with shrewd subtlety, this invisible, intelligent personal foe is plotting and scheming to allure, deceive and lead us into sin—when with sober judgment we consider all these things, then indeed we realize that we are in the midst of a great conflict.

The three points of attack by the enemy are, as the Apostle John (1 John 2:16) enumerates them, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

The first of these includes all those appetites and passions common to the whole human family, which in their legitimate uses under the full control of reason and conscience, are right and proper, but which, unduly cultivated until they become the masters of reason and conscience, degrade and debase the man.

The second,—"the lust of the eyes,"—includes all those ambitions to acquire and possess whatsoever things the eye (the natural eye or the eye of the understanding) perceives to be good; **i.e.,** to be gratifying to the carnal mind, the old unregenerate nature. This disposition impels to self-gratification regardless of the rights and liberties of others in any direction. It craves wealth, or fame, or power, or social distinction, and to these ends it inclines to harness every energy of mind and body.

The third,—"the pride of life,"—is the blossom of selfishness, so abhorrent to God and to all good men. It is that disposition in a man which glories in his shame. When the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes have brought their curse of narrowness, bigotry and conceit; and when they have gone further in depriving fellow-men of their rights and privileges, then pride, the exultation of meanness, has its short triumph, and loftily soars above the unfortunate subjects of its power and gloats over the desolation it has wrought.

These three points of attack by the great enemy are the points which the Lord would have us guard with unwearied vigilance. Be sober, be vigilant, and watch that the enemy gain no approach to the citadel of your heart by any one of these routes.

That he makes repeated attacks is certain; and that these attacks come suddenly and without warning, and often with terrible force, is a matter of experience with all: hence the necessity for sober and constant vigilance. Be assured the ever watchful enemy will take advantage of our unguarded moments and our unfortified conditions if such there be. Even with all the watchfulness and readiness which we can command, the ability to withstand the enemy and to resist his attacks causes more or less suffering, and often taxes the powers of endurance to the utmost. Indeed, we must expect that the tension on our powers of endurance will sometimes be so great as to threaten disruption, and as to surely cause it if we trust to our own strength. We are forewarned to think not strange of the **fiery** trial that shall surely try us if we are indeed the sons of God and soldiers of Christ, as though some strange thing happened unto us. (1 Pet. 4:12-16.)

in ignorance. None but the true child of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless foe., It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for Truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

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"Ye Have Seen the Patience of Job"

The saints of every Age have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes"; and again, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word." (Psalm 119:67, 71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore experiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children, whom he loved, then of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with sore disease—boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sorrows by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may."

Preciousness of Intimate Fellowship With God

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unfailing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and Truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light—clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage." Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfilment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?—
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!"
—Z. '15: 344-346.

Sobriety, Vigilance, Steadfastness

1 Pet. 5: 8, 9.

WHAT more appropriate watchwords than these could express the proper attitude of the Christian soldier?—"Be **sober**, be **vigilant**; because your Adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom **resist, steadfast in the faith,** knowing that the same afflictions are endured by your brotherhood in the world."

The "brotherhood" includes all the soldiers of Christ throughout the world, and this symbol of their present character is not a mere empty sound; for there is a mighty conflict in progress, a war being waged, and the encounter is one of desperate earnestness. Those who know nothing of this great conflict, and who have no part in it, though they may bear the name of Christ—Christians—really have no right to that name; for they are not Christ's soldiers. Jesus himself was a soldier, and fought the battle through to the bitter end, and gained the victory. And he is the Captain of all those who accept the redemption he purchased and that follow in his footsteps, and he will lead them on to certain victory, if they faint not.—Gal. 6: 9.

The Apostle Paul gives the same idea of the Christian life. He represents it as a desperate warfare, and urges all the true soldiers of Christ to "put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil; for," says he, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. . . . Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness," etc.—Eph. 6:10-18.

When we consider how strongly our adversary is intrenched in the world—in its ideas, its maxims, its institutions, its policy, its hopes, aims and ambitions—and the Christian life as in direct opposition to all these; and when we further consider how, because we were once partakers of the spirit of the world, the enemy of our souls has strongly intrenched himself in our weak fallen natures; and still further, how, with shrewd subtlety, this invisible, intelligent personal foe is plotting and scheming to allure, deceive and lead us into sin—when with sober judgment we consider all these things, then indeed we realize that we are in the midst of a great conflict.

The three points of attack by the enemy are, as the Apostle John (1 John 2:16) enumerates them, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

The first of these includes all those appetites and passions common to the whole human family, which in their legitimate uses under the full control of reason and conscience, are right and proper, but which, unduly cultivated until they become the masters of reason and conscience, degrade and debase the man.

The second,—"the lust of the eyes,"—includes all those ambitions to acquire and possess whatsoever things the eye (the natural eye or the eye of the understanding) perceives to be good; **i.e.,** to be gratifying to the carnal mind, the old unregenerate nature. This disposition impels to self-gratification regardless of the rights and liberties of others in any direction. It craves wealth, or fame, or power, or social distinction, and to these ends it inclines to harness every energy of mind and body.

The third,—"the pride of life,"—is the blossom of selfishness, so abhorrent to God and to all good men. It is that disposition in a man which glories in his shame. When the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes have brought their curse of narrowness, bigotry and conceit; and when they have gone further in depriving fellow-men of their rights and privileges, then pride, the exultation of meanness, has its short triumph, and loftily soars above the unfortunate subjects of its power and gloats over the desolation it has wrought.

These three points of attack by the great enemy are the points which the Lord would have us guard with unwearied vigilance. Be sober, be vigilant, and watch that the enemy gain no approach to the citadel of your heart by any one of these routes.

That he makes repeated attacks is certain; and that these attacks come suddenly and without warning, and often with terrible force, is a matter of experience with all: hence the necessity for sober and constant vigilance. Be assured the ever watchful enemy will take advantage of our unguarded moments and our unfortified conditions if such there be. Even with all the watchfulness and readiness which we can command, the ability to withstand the enemy and to resist his attacks causes more or less suffering, and often taxes the powers of endurance to the utmost. Indeed, we must expect that the tension on our powers of endurance will sometimes be so great as to threaten disruption, and as to surely cause it if we trust to our own strength. We are forewarned to think not strange of the fiery trial that shall surely try us if we are indeed the sons of God and soldiers of Christ, as though some strange thing happened unto us. (1 Pet. 4:12-16.)

These things should be expected and carefully prepared for by the Christian soldier.

Peter intimates that the power by which we are to resist the adversary is the power of faith—"whom **resist, steadfast in the faith.**" And John expresses the same thought, saying, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.) If we are not strong in the faith, how can we endure hardness for it? Faith must grasp the exceeding great and precious promises of God and appreciate their value. Faith must lay hold also upon the power of God and find the grace to help in every time of need. And faith in a personal righteous God, whose eye is ever upon us, must steadily cultivate those elements of character which are always pleasing and acceptable to him, and which Peter tells us are most essential to our final overcoming in this warfare.—2 Pet. 1:5-10.

He urges that, in addition to our faith in the exceeding great and precious promises which inspire zeal and give us renewed courage, we should give all diligence to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." Then he adds, "For if ye do these things, ye shall **never fall.**"

The steady persistent cultivation of these graces of character will also clarify our spiritual vision, enabling us the more fully to comprehend the truth of God, and thus, "by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," we shall be able to "withstand all the fiery darts of the adversary" and to win the victory of faith.

With this view of the great battle of life to the Christian, what a work we realize to be before us, and what necessity for sobriety, vigilance and steadfastness! It is a life work, a life battle against a mighty foe intrenched in our flesh. The powers without are strong indeed, but the civil war with the powers within is by far the most to be dreaded. If we become in any measure intoxicated with the spirit of the world;—if we give way to self-gratification, love of ease, pleasure, a little indulgence of any of the old dispositions of envy, malice, pride, vainglory, vaunting of self, headiness, highmindedness, wrath, strife, or any such thing—even a little, Oh, how great is the peril to which we are exposed!

Beloved, let us war a good warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil, seeking and finding, daily and hourly, fresh supplies of grace; for every day and every hour is a time of need if we are but awake to realize it. It is to the warfare with the powers intrenched within that we are again referred, when it is said, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) Yes, the task is a greater one, and represents a greater, as well as a nobler, effort. Let us fight the good fight of faith along this line. Let our lives be a daily and hourly struggle to overcome the evil that is in ourselves, to purify and beautify our own characters. Thus shall we be the more fully prepared to strive faithfully and steadily against the foes without—to war a good warfare to the end.

The Apostle, out of the fulness of his love and sympathy for all his comrades in the army of the Lord, adds to his earnest exhortation this parting benediction—"The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." It is only through endurance of hardness as good soldiers of Christ that this desirable condition can be attained—viz., perfect self-control and ability to resist evil, established faith, patience and virtue, settled, abiding rest in Christ, and hope through his word of promise. This undoubtedly was the Apostle's own experience as he grew old in the Master's service, and so may it be ours.—Z. '95:200-202.

Solomon's Wisdom

"Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom."—Prov. 4:7.

WISDOM is properly defined to be (1) the power of discerning what is true and right, what is conducive to the highest interests. (2) Conformity, so far as one's own conduct is concerned, to the course of action dictated by such discernment. The world-famed Gough summed up wisdom in these words, "Wisdom is knowledge made our own and properly applied."

The best-intentioned people find continually, under the pressure of their own weaknesses and the temptations which surround mankind, that they are inclined to slip away from the noble standards and sentiments of their hearts. Experience demonstrates, too, that all need frequently to look about them and to compare present attainments with the past to find their bearings, to note whether or not they are making progress or retrograding. Our advice to all consecrated Christians is that such introspection be taken nightly before we retire to rest—that each day's progress be noted and that fresh resolutions be presented evening and morning at the Throne of Grace to be practiced to the extent of our ability daily.

Wisdom Our Watchword

But while (the eyes of our understanding opening wider daily and hourly) we discern the Divine character in clearer lines and discern our own blemishes more perspicuously, nevertheless the eye of faith sees with the greater clearness also that a full atonement was made by our Redeemer, not only for our share in the original sin, but also for our unintentional weaknesses, which result from our relationship to Adam and the fall. Thus the Lord's people may have a hope and joy and confidence toward Him which others cannot realize—which is not applicable to others—which they can obtain only by coming to the Heavenly Father in the appointed way, through faith in the redemptive work of the Son.

The word wisdom takes on a variety of shades as it passes through the lenses of different minds and hence it behooves us as the Lord's people to make no mistake—to get the right kind of wisdom—to find the wisdom which cometh from above and to clearly distinguish between it and other wisdom, which the Scriptures tell us is only foolishness. It is the Apostle Paul who explains that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God and that likewise the wisdom which God inculcates is often esteemed foolishness by the worldly wise.

The Wisdom of This World

To illustrate: One class of these worldly wise men say to us by their actions, which speak louder than words—"Money is the principal thing, therefor with all your getting get money, for with it you can have all things and without it you can have nothing." Of course, there is a certain amount of worldly logic in this, else it would not appeal to so large a number of people as being the voice of wisdom directing to the proper course in life. Nevertheless many of those thus taught have, after a few years, demonstrated by their own course the fallacy, the unwisdom of this proposition. There are things which money cannot buy and which the pursuit of money is almost sure to drive away. One of these is health; another, peace of mind; another, joy; another, a restful conscience; another, the knowledge of God; another, growth in grace; another, fellowship with the Father, the Lord Jesus and the brethren; another, hope toward God in respect to the Heavenly inheritance which He has promised to those who love Him supremely—better than they love houses or lands or money or any other thing or being.

Another class of the worldly wise, and these are usually the children of wealth—though sometimes merely "spongers," who, like parasites, live off the energy of others—tell us that true wisdom is the pursuit of pleasure, in field games, theatricals, cards, checkers, chess, dominoes, etc., or mental revelries in novel reading. . . .

Scientific Wisdom Lacking

Another class of worldly wise tell us that science and philosophy are the only things worthy of the noblest minds and intellects. They tell us that the word science signifies that which is true and that the special aim of scientists is to help their fellow men by uncovering the truth, by getting rid of all the ignorance and deceptions that surround various matters and things and thus bring Truth to the front. They tell us that thus the scientists are the real teachers of the world. They tell us that philosophy teaches the love of wisdom, which leads to search for it, and that in the last analysis they are really the wise men of the world who make it their business to help other men to wisdom along all the pathways of life, in matters of financial and social, mental, moral and natural science.

At last we seem to find in this profession what we are seeking, true wisdom with noble objects before it. We commend their love of truth and their desire to rid themselves of all superstition and error and we pause to examine the practical working of this wisdom and to note the blessings it brings to these philosophers. Our examination disappoints us; the philosophers are not happy.

The geologist with his hammer, his tubes, his glasses, etc., chips and examines the rocks and philosophizes as to how long ago they were formed, the method of their formation, the probable conditions of the earth at that time, etc., etc., etc. He reaches a fanciful conclusion and takes a degree of pleasure in presenting his deductions to fellow scientists, but they all know that he does not know, that he is merely guessing and his findings neither satisfy his own heart nor can give satisfaction on such a subject to his fellow scientists.

The biologist studies the human anatomy and the anatomy of the largest animals with a view to tracing how men came from a monkey, and how the monkey came from some lower order of creature. He plumes himself on the logic of his theory, and for a few short years has a place among his worldly wise associates, a little later on to be branded as a back number in the light of some other theories and facts which some other biologist shall have conceived and set forth.

The Wisdom From Above

Let us now turn from these worldly wise men and their instructions that we may hearken to the voice of the Lord our God, which tells us that true wisdom comes from Above. And what is more reasonable than this? Knowing so little of ourselves, why should we not expect to be informed, to be taught, to be instructed in the true wisdom by our Creator. As the Alpha and Omega, the first and the Last, our Lord is the foundation of Wisdom, and we should anticipate that from this foundation alone could come the sweet satisfaction and blessing which all hearts crave.

The Bible has a very terse manner of presenting Divine instruction on this subject; its information is given in no uncertain terms; it declares that much of the earthly wisdom is merely bitter jealousy and strife—"earthly, animal, devilish." If we apply these words to the various kinds of wisdom set before us by the world we may know their appropriateness. For instance, the wisdom which commends wealth as the goal: does it not involve its votaries in bitter jealousies, envyings, strife, along the lines of commercial conflict and piracy? . . .

Let us examine carefully the true wisdom from Above which the Scriptures enjoin (Jas. 3:17). It is first pure—it sets purity as its highest standard, and the word pure takes in the thought of honesty, sincerity. Whatever questions arise respecting our dealings, our conduct, our thoughts, the first point to be decided would be, is it pure, is it honest, is it true? If this cannot be answered affirmatively that is enough, heavenly Wisdom says.

If the question stands the first test, the second one would be, is my motive a peaceable one? Would I thus be doing all that I properly could do to preserve peace, harmony, accord in my own heart and in my dealings with others, or would the course considered be likely to awaken strife? Only peaceable dispositions are approved by the Lord, and this thought should continually guide the Lord's people, with a desire to be pleasing to Him. This, however, does not mean a lack of firmness of character, nor the lack of a proper combativeness to oppose the wrong in the proper manner and on suitable occasions. It merely means that our conduct should be as peaceable as loyalty to righteousness will permit. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory."

Pure Wisdom Gentle

Gentleness is given as the third mark of heavenly wisdom. The world in general has grown to appreciate the sentiment that gentleness is a propriety. Indeed, to declare that some people are not gentlemen would be one of the surest ways of so arousing their temper as to cause a display of feeling which would be anything but gentle. The gentleness of the world is largely on the outside—polish, good breeding; but the gentleness which the heavenly wisdom inculcates extends from the inside to the outside. The thoughts are gentle—brought under control by the various injunctions and instructions of the Word of the Lord. The whole life of the regenerated Christian is brought under control of the Spirit of holiness, which is on all proper occasions a spirit of gentleness, meekness, patience and long suffering.

There may be times when the direction of the Lord's Word would cause His people exercised by His Spirit to seem ungentle, to seem severe even, yet it would be the result of a failure to rightly discriminate on the subject. For instance, it might become the duty of a parent to exercise discipline in his family, and the disciplined ones might consider no discipline as gentleness; whereas the Lord has directed that the parent should have his children in proper subjection, and that he who spareth the rod hateth his child. From the standpoint of the Scriptures all chastisement, however deserved, should be given in moderation, and with the gentlest of heart sentiments toward the transgressor, and with the utmost sympathy for his hereditary weaknesses and blemishes, which require such extreme correction; and no such discipline should be given except at a time when the mind is thus well poised and full of parental sympathy and love. Gentleness and firmness are not in conflict, though sometimes their combination is not rightly understood or appreciated by those who lack the wisdom from above.

Generous, Warm-Hearted

The fourth point to be remembered in connection with the heavenly wisdom is that those who are exercised by it are easy of entreatment—they are not hard hearted, cold, stony; they can be touched with sympathy, and will manifest their sympathy even though they may not always allow it to rule them nor always allow it to hinder them from exercising proper disciplines. There is a difference between being easily entreated and being "soft," spineless. The wisdom from above has a firm texture of character, without coarseness, roughness, rudeness, hardness.

The fifth element of heavenly wisdom is to be full of mercy—overflowing with mercy, with generous impulses, with kindly feelings, with compassion and sympathy for those in any trouble or distress. This, however, would not mean a mercy without gauges and conditions. Mercy may fill one full and yet be limited and restrained in its course of action, because sound judgment may dictate that in some cases the restraint of mercy would be for the benefit, advantage of the offender. In a word where the spirit of the world would be that of vindictiveness, hatred and animosity because of some evil done, the Spirit of the Lord, the wisdom from above, would be full of mercy, compassion, sympathy, and would be restrained from full forgiveness and remission of all penalties only as sound judgment should indicate that such a generous course would be contrary to the best interests of the culprit.

Lastly, the wisdom from above is full of good fruits, and delights in whatsoever things are true, honest, pure, lovely and of good report. Cannot we see the philosophy connected with this wisdom—that the possessor of it is sure to be blessed in his heart experience, to have happiness, joy, peace and blessing himself, as well as sure to scatter blessings wherever he may go? This is the tendency of this heavenly wisdom; this is the wisdom from above. This is the wisdom, therefore, referred to in the words, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom," the wisdom with these characteristics.

We remark, however, that there is only one way to put ourselves into relationship with the Lord so as to be able to receive this wisdom from above. The way is Christ—through faith in His blood as our sin atonement. Still more than this, it means a renunciation of our sins, an endeavor to walk in the Lord's way, leading to a full consecration of heart and life to Him. Only from this last standpoint can any hope to receive the wisdom from above, the true wisdom.—B.S.M. Vol 7:4:4.

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Our Lord has always provided for his Church the food necessary to her welfare; and he always "giveth liberally." The proper attitude for the Church is to be active in eating the food already received and in using the strength derived from it. She is not to leave the table bountifully spread to pray for more. When more would be beneficial more will be sent by the hand of some "servant" of God and the Church. Nor will the true "servant" find it necessary to make the food; for it will be given him by the great Householder. It will be "found" by him, and when he presents it to the Lord's family, they will be able to discern upon it the stamp of divine truth. . . . Let us remember, however, that we cannot break open any secrets which God may wish to conceal as not yet appropriate "meat in due season"; nor should we wish to do so. The small boy who bangs away at the unripe apple until it falls gets food which makes him very sick: the ripe apple is very easily plucked. The unripe chestnut burr is difficult to pluck and very troublesome to open, and when open its fruit is unwholesome; but the ripe burr will fall and open of itself and its meat is sweet. Our diligence should be rather to watch the ripening processes of divine providence, and to hold our minds and hearts in humble readiness for all the rich fruitage of the advancing seasons, assured that our Master knoweth what things we have need of and will supply them to us in due time—directly or indirectly, it matters not so long as it is truth, from him and for us.—Z. '95:218.

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Knowledge is a blessing **only** to those who are subject to the divine will.—Q. '92:1:7.

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The Lord's assurance to his truly consecrated children is, that all things shall work together for good to them. (Rom. 8:28.) God assures them that having entered into a new relationship with him, all of their affairs are henceforth his affairs and concern. Consequently, they may realize, fully, that however the world may be subject to **accidents,** incidental to present imperfect conditions under the curse, God's "little ones" are his peculiar care. Not a hair of their heads may suffer injury without his knowledge and consent. (Matt. 10:30; Luke 12:7.) How wonderful! And yet how reasonable when we recall the assurance that, "Like as a father (earthly) pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him."—Psalm 103:13; Q. '02:4:14.

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We should not be content with neutrality in connection with the Truth and its service.—Z. '08:154.

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Jacob had a method of marking the special manifestations of divine Providence,—as when he called the place in which he wrestled with the angel Peniel; as a reminder that there he had been privileged to see, representatively, the Lord's face, to receive the Lord's blessing, the light of his countenance. Similarly, it is profitable to the spiritual Israelites that we should make note in some special manner of all the Lord's mercies and providences toward us. Many feel poor as respects the Lord's favor and blessing, simply because they have failed to let them make a proper impression upon their hearts at the time they were received. Divine favors are soon lost from our leaky earthen vessels unless special notation is made at the time, either upon the tablets of memory, or in some other manner to refresh memory.—Z. '01:271.

◆

Our Lord assures us that each of his little ones, his faithful, humble little Flock, have a constant representation in the Father's presence. There is a guardian angel for each of the Lord's people, and we are to get the thought that there is no delay in the bringing of any and everything which pertains to their welfare and interest before the attention of the great King. What a thought is here for those who are inclined to be heady and to despise or in any manner over-ride or mistreat the humble ones of the body of Christ! And what a lesson is here also for the humble ones—that they are the special objects of divine care and providence, for whom, therefore, all things must work well, because they belong to the Lord!—Z. '00:207.

◆

The **elect** will not be received of the Lord with chidings and upbraidings for the imperfections of the flesh, which were unwillingly theirs, but on the contrary all the weaknesses of the flesh will be ignored, and the intents of the heart alone will be judged, and the heart-character formed will alone be tested and approved; and this will determine whether or not we shall stand the Lord's approval and be granted the glorious things which he has promised to them that love him.—Z. '05:201.

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Our Lord would have all the true branches realize his love, his interest, his care for them: hence he assures them of his love in the strongest possible language. He tells them that his love for them is of the same kind as the Father's love for him. Even with all the various evidences of the truthfulness of this statement, corroborated by the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the Lord's Word, it is far too wonderful for us to fully comprehend. We can readily see how and why our Lord Jesus was greatly beloved of the Father, and called his well-beloved Son, but it astounds us to know that this same love is exercised by our Lord in turn toward us. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:" for our Lord Jesus expressed and fully manifested the Father's love.—1 John 3:1; John 14:7; Z. '99:111.

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It is well for the Lord's people to have clearly in mind that as the Master designated himself the Way, **the Truth,** the Life, so all who are truly his disciples must be of the Truth.—Z. '05:142.

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There is such a sympathy and union and fellowship in the Body of Christ that each is intimately and deeply interested in each other member, so that the interests of one are the interests of all.—Z. '12:46.

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The true Christian will cultivate the disposition to think charitably of the words and actions of others, and to suppose that their intentions are good, until he has positive evidence to the contrary. —Z. '12:335.

◆

No two of us have the same natural disposition, no two of us, therefore, need the same disciplinary training at the hand of the Lord. We have confidence in his wisdom and love; let us manifest it, realizing that if our trials are greater our blessings will be proportionate, and as the Lord said to Paul, so he would say to each of us, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9.) Z. '08:174.

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Retrospection

"Thou shalt remember the way which the Lord thy God led thee." "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which has great recompence of reward."—Deut. 8:2; Heb. 10:35.

He was better to me than all my hopes.
He was better than all my fears;
He made a bridge of my broken works,
And a rainbow of my tears.
The billows that guarded my sea-girt path,
Carried my Lord on their crest;
When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march,
I can lean on his love for the rest.

He emptied my hands of my treasured store,
And his covenant love revealed;
There was not a wound in my aching heart,
But the balm of his breath hath healed.
Oh, tender and true was the chastening sore,
In wisdom that taught and tried,
Till the soul he sought was trusting in him,
And nothing on earth beside.

He guided my path that I could not see,
By ways that I have not known,
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain,
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise him still for the pleasant palms,
And the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillars of flame by night,
And the sheltering cloud by day.

And if to warfare he calls me forth,
He buckles my armor on;
He greets me with smiles and a word of cheer
For battles his sword hath won;
He wipes my brow as I droop and faint,
He blesses my hand to toil;
Faithful is he, as he washes my feet,
From the trace of each earthly soil.

There is light for me on the trackless wild,
As the wonders of old I trace,
When the God of the whole earth went before
To search me a resting place.
Has he changed for me? Nay! He changes n
He will bring me by some new way,
Through fire and flood, and each crafty foe,
As safely as yesterday.

Never a watch in the dreariest halt,
But some promise of love endears;
I read from the past that my future shall be
Far better than all my fears,—
Like the golden pot of the wilderness bread,
Laid up with the blossoming rod,
All safe in the ark with the law of the Lord,
Is the covenant care of my God.—Z. '94: 215.

Not Now, My Child

"Father, I long to spread thy Truth o'er land and sea!"
I listen, and there comes to me
His answer, tender, loving, mild,
"Not now, my child."

"Father, my heart is sad; I fain would leave this wilderness,
Go forth earth's groaning ones to bless!"
I hear again his answer mild,
"Not now, my child."

"Father, I yearn to break these fleshly fetters an
be free.—
As pants the hart, I pant for thee."
His voice, how sweet, how tender, mild,
"Not now, my child."

"Father, thy will be done; I humbly leave it all wit
thee,
Thou knowest what is best for me!"
I hear his voice, so low, so mild,
"Come now, my child."—Z. '07: 281.

Covet Earnestly the Best

God has his best things for the few
Whose love shall stand the test;
God has his second choice for those
Who do not crave his best.

It is not always open sin
That risks the promised rest;
A good more often is the foe
That keeps us from the best.—Z. '96: 3

J. A. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 104

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD: AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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The Close of a Noble Life

Gen. 50:15-26.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—Psa. 90.3.

JACOB was a hundred and thirty years old when his sons returned with news of Joseph's greatness in the land of Egypt. His joy at hearing that his son was still alive, and now great, was offset by the natural weakness of his advanced years. Hence he could scarcely trust himself to believe the report, even with the explanation given by his sons, of how they had sold Joseph into slavery, and had besmeared his coat with blood for their father's deception, twenty-two years before. However, the story of his sons was well attested by the royal present which Joseph had sent to him, and by the Egyptian wagons sent to bear him and the family as comfortably as possible in the journey. These wagons were doubtless the carriages of that day, workmanship in that line not having advanced to present proficiency. Jacob was persuaded, and started on the journey, during which he offered sacrifices to the Lord, possibly questioning in his own mind the wisdom of thus leaving the land of promise, and whether or not it might be interpreted of the Lord as an abandonment of his faith, or a relinquishment of the blessing which from earliest childhood had centered and directed his course of life.

The Lord answered his query, and his sacrifices (probably by a dream) assuring him that he was taking the proper course in going into Egypt, and that ultimately his posterity should come again into "the land of promise." The spiritual Israelite should thus have in view at all times that which by his covenant has become the center of his life, the center of his interest, of his hopes and of his aims—the Abrahamic covenant and his share therein. He, too, must be on the look-out lest there shall be deceptions of the Adversary combined with earthly prosperity and the world's favor. When we are undergoing disadvantages or persecutions we are in much less danger than when the tide of worldly prosperity sets in our direction. Let us remember at such times to go often to the Lord, to seek to know his will, fully, completely; to bring to mind our covenant and its value, as above all earthly considerations. And let us offer unto the Lord the true sacrifice—presenting the merits of our dear Redeemer's sacrifice as the ground of our acceptance, repeating the full devotion of our hearts—renewing our covenant. This is the only safe way in this pilgrim journey.

We pass hastily over the narrative of the presentation of Jacob and Joseph's brethren to Pharaoh, and their settlement in the land of Goshen. After they had resided there seventeen years (Gen. 47:28) Jacob died, was buried with all the ceremonials common to the Egyptian court, because he was a relative of Pharaoh's representative. And it is here that our lesson proper begins. Joseph's brothers judged him to have a disposition considerably like their own; they could not believe him to be thoroughly generous and forgiving, and though they acknowledged his kindness toward them, they said to themselves, This was merely on account of our father Jacob, and not on our account, and now that our father is dead Joseph will treat us differently. It was because moved with such feelings that they first sent a messenger to Joseph, and afterward followed themselves into his presence, to ask his mercy and to declare themselves willing to be his servants.

It strikes us that this well illustrates the condition of many who come to the Lord with an insufficiency of faith. They are convinced of his mercy toward them, and yet are always fearful. The truth is that they do not know him; they think of him as moved by like passions with themselves, more or less depraved, more or less controlled by animosity. It is an evidence of growth in grace when we come to that place in our experiences where, admitting our own guilt and unworthiness of divine favor we have, nevertheless, become so intimately acquainted with the Lord as to have a full assurance of faith in his declaration that our sins are forgiven. It is to such a development of grace that the Lord referred, saying, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.) But such a knowledge is not to be obtained instantaneously, but rather is to be the result of a growth in grace; for we grow in grace as we grow in knowledge, and we grow in knowledge as we grow in grace;—the two keeping pace, the one with the other, as do our feet in walking. It is because the majority who have named the name of Christ do not grow in grace and in knowledge that they fail to attain to that grand condition of which the Apostle speaks as "full assurance of faith"—full confidence in the Lord, in his goodness, in his wisdom, in his love, in his providential care over all of their affairs. And the lack of such growth is owing to their failure to offer their sacrifices unto the Lord—to commit all of their ways to him.

Joseph's answer to his brethren was most noble, and gives good evidence that his conduct was not merely an outward profession, but the result of an established character. He did not even say to himself, My brothers have misunderstood me, but though I freely forgive them I will use their fear as a stepping stone to greater power over them, and will say to them, I will do you no harm, but on the contrary treat you most kindly, as long as you are fully obedient to me, and send me presents yearly, or give me tithes of your increase, or come annually to make obeisance before me, and to acknowledge afresh your wrong, and to confess my generosity. No; he had too noble a character for this; he was too unselfish. On the contrary, he said, "Fear not; for am I in the place of God?" The secret of his right course with his brethren was the correct view which he took of the matter himself; he saw himself as merely God's servant in dealing with his brethren, and in all things. He saw that God's providence had been in the whole affair. How could he think otherwise? He saw the fulfilment of his inspired dreams; he had noted the miraculous leading of divine providence in the various steps by which he had been led from slavery to the throne of Egypt; he probably reflected that if now he should either do evil toward his brethren, or think unkindly of them, he would be casting a reflection upon one of the instrumentalities which God had used for his blessing. He could not do this and be loyal to and appreciative of divine power, and he communicated to his brothers for their encouragement and comfort this thought; that although they had purposed evil, and had done evil, nevertheless the thing really done was a good thing, but for which they deserved no credit, but discredit, and God all the honor. He would have them see that this was the basis of his dealing with them, and that he felt not the slightest animosity, but a full appreciation of the divine blessing, which had come through their course.

How great a blessing it would be for all spiritual Israelites to learn well this lesson; viz., that if we accept the results of any matter as being good, and if we realize that we were guided to those results by divine providence, we should think and feel most generously, most kindly, toward those who were the instruments used by providence, notwithstanding the fact that they might have been unwilling instructors, or, like Joseph's brethren, have verily intended opposite results. Those who are enabled to take such a view of affairs and forces operating in their daily lives are enabled "always to triumph through the Lord," as the Apostle expresses it. And such find no room for bitterness or railing, either against Satan or against any of his servants. 2 Cor. 2:14; Jude 9.

This does not mean that they call the evil course good; nor that they will or should have any sympathy with the evil course; nor with the evil motives inspiring it; nor with the evil persons, so long as they are in harmony with the evil motives and evil course. But it does mean that their minds will be so filled with the thought of divine supervision in their affairs, and how all the time they were safe under the protecting care, the shadow of the Almighty, and that all things are working for their good, however they outwardly appear, that they will not have any bitterness whatever, either of word or of heart, toward those who attempted to, and outwardly did, do them evil, but whose evil intentions and conduct were overruled by the Almighty. In proportion as the Lord's people get into the large place where they can take a proper view of the situation, in that same proportion will they find themselves not only delivered from anger and malice and hatred and strife toward their opponents, but instead, possessed of "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," ruling in their hearts, keeping them secure amidst all of the storms and vicissitudes of life—because their anchor holds within the vail. They have "set to their seal that the Lord is true," and hence can rejoice always.

Not only was Joseph's course the right one in the sight of God, the noble one in the sight of all right-minded people, the blessed one as respected his brothers, their comfort, their peace, their love toward him,—but it was in every sense the proper and the best course as respected his own peace, joy, blessing. When he allayed their fears and comforted them, and spake kindly unto them, and promised them and their families the same care as when their father lived, he was taking also the course which must have brought the greatest blessing and comfort to his own heart. All do not know it, but it is a fact that the grandest quality that man can exercise, and the one which brings the largest amount of blessing itself, is the exercise of the God-like quality of **mercy**, compassion, benevolence. Those of spiritual Israel who have not practiced in this direction are not far advanced in spiritual development, and those who have practiced realize the truthfulness of the Lord's words, "Blessed are the merciful," and "Blessed are the peacemakers."

The next few verses of our lesson cover the period of fifty-four years from the death of Jacob to the death of Joseph; and give us comparatively little information, except that they give fresh evidence that the basis of Joseph's strength of character and fidelity to principle which carried him safely through the vicissitudes of his remarkable experience was faith in God—faith in the Abrahamic promise. And so we find it today, and all through the past, so far as we are able to decipher the teachings of history; those who have been the Lord's faithful people, have all been inspired by the hope set before us in the gospel. This is the hope of which the Apostle speaks, saying that it is "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast:"—it holds firm and secure in the storms and difficulties of life, and prevents the wrecking of our lives upon the rocks of sin, deception, doubt, selfishness, etc.

Who can doubt that it was Joseph's respect unto the divine promise that kept him faithful as Potiphar's steward, again in the prison, and again as Pharaoh's representative in the throne? In proportion as heavenly promises are before our minds, earthly and selfish ambitions are dwarfed and lose their power over us. Joseph's eye of faith, centered upon God's promise to Abraham and upon the land of Canaan, exercised a potent influence, because he realized that to be a friend of God, and an heir of God's promises, called for a purity of heart and of life which God could approve. Looking back he saw the influence of these promises upon his great grandfather, Abraham, upon his grandfather, Isaac, and upon his father Jacob, and we see that the same promise controlled him to his great advantage. The people who today become enamored of wealth and of position and of power, so that they would be willing to sacrifice principles of justice and of truth that they might selfishly grasp these, thereby give evidence that they lack the power of the truth, the power of the Abrahamic promise, to control them and their lives. Had the Abrahamic promise not been forceful and weighty in the mind of Joseph he might have been plotting and scheming for the throne of Egypt or to have obtained the mastery over his own brethren; but realizing that God was behind the promise he was waiting patiently for that, as the greatest and most wonderful blessing conceivable—far beyond the things which he could have grasped, and the grasping of which would have meant his relinquishment of God's promise. Not, however, that he expected to go up out of Egypt into the land of Canaan himself; for he evidently knew, and it probably came down to us through him, that God had appeared to Abraham, and told him, that his posterity should be in Egypt, and be evilly treated there.

Joseph's hope in God and in that Abrahamic promise must have been, therefore, a hope through a **resurrection** of the dead; and although it taught a valuable lesson, it was doubtless because of his imperfect understanding of the resurrection, and the power of God, that he so particularly gave commandment respecting the carrying up of his bones out of Egypt into Canaan, when the time of God's favor should come, and Israel should be delivered. And so must the spiritual Israelite have his mind centered in the future fulfillment of the divine promises, through a **resurrection of the dead,** if he would be delivered from the worldly influences of this present time, and be kept loyal to the Lord and to the highest principles of character. This faith in a future kingdom, future honor, future riches, future glory, dwarfs into insignificance the honor and glory and wealth of this present time, and makes all true believers separate from the world in these respects, and thus prepares them to think of the affairs of this present time from a more just and more equitable and dispassionate standpoint—they are removed from the immediate influence of selfishness in its most powerful forms, even though they still find, notwithstanding their faith in the promises, the necessity for keeping the body under, and mortifying its natural disposition toward selfishness.

Our **Golden Text** is appropriate to the lesson, and every way worthy of the attention of the spiritual Israelite. We know that our days are numbered as respects the present life. We know that we need not expect eternal life under present conditions, and thus far the world and the Christian are on a common level; but here they part, the one saying to himself, "Life is short, and I must grasp and use it for myself, the best I can." The other, with a higher wisdom, that cometh from above, realizes his own inability and insufficiency, heeds the message from the Lord respecting an eternal life beyond the tomb—the resurrection life, and goes to the Lord, petitioning for wisdom respecting the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.

In answer to his petitions he is taught of God in the experience of life to more and more appreciate the eternal, the everlasting life, and to spend time and energy in building up such a character as would be pleasing to his Creator, and bring the reward of "life everlasting." The Christian, in numbering his days, does not do so with a doleful or disconsolate sentiment, although he does so with sobriety. He counts the days as they go as so many blessings, so many privileges, so many opportunities to "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," to render assistance to others in the pilgrim journey, and to develop in himself more and more of the character pleasing in the sight of God,—to become more and more a copy of God's dear Son. As he numbers the days gliding swiftly by, and perceives how he is using them in harmony with the divine instructions, he ultimately comes to that condition of heart in which he is longing for the Kingdom and the full attainment of all the glories into which he hopes to be ushered, as a sharer in the first (**chief**) resurrection. And from this standpoint he numbers the days as they go by joyfully, and is glad when the days of the years of his present pilgrimage end; because his hope in the Lord, and in the gracious features of his plan, is growing daily stronger, clearer and brighter.—Z. '01: 330-333.

Trials Essential to Character Development

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."—James 1:2.

THE Apostle James intimates that temptations may overtake the followers of Christ, into which they will fall as into a snare. As for an army, traps are set by the enemy, so the great Adversary sets traps and snares for us. He endeavors to misguide our minds and to lead us away from proper conceptions of truth and righteousness. We should be very careful to avoid his snares. Nevertheless, in spite of diligence, we may fall into a trap.

The Apostle says we are to rejoice when we fall into various temptations—not that we are to rejoice if we fall into **sin** when tempted, but that we may rejoice if we find ourselves suddenly precipitated into temptation. Temptation is not sin. If we could but keep in mind the fact that every temptation, every trial, every persecution, every difficulty in life, permitted to come upon us who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to **prove us,** to test our love, to see whether or not our characters are **fixed,** rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight and overcoming. When we find ourselves suddenly in temptation, trial, we should say, If by these temptations, or trials, the Lord is proving my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fulness of my love and devotion to Him and His cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing—the world, the flesh or the Adversary—whatever it might be that had brought the snare.

Thus viewed and thus met we can rejoice in every such experience; every trial and every difficulty will prove a blessing; for we shall, first of all, have an opportunity to show the Lord that we will endure, and not compromise His cause or our own position as His servants. We can rejoice also because we know that under such trials our characters will make advancement toward crystallization, if we overcome; and because we know that the Lord would not let us fall into any temptation which He would not cause to work out for us a blessing if we are wholly loyal. Let us dwell often upon the words of the Apostles: "Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." "Greatly rejoice, though now for a season ye are in manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully under] temptation; for after his trials he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, **work out** for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"—if rightly utilized; if we are rightly exercised by them.—1 Peter 1:7; James 1:2, 12.

"He That Endureth"

We are assured that those who love the Lord, and who because of this will receive the Kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations on the way. Those who do not love the Lord with **all** their hearts—in whom self or some other idol has first place—will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the Adversary, into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or Divine providences. They will have schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's Plan. These when analyzed will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness or upon ambition or an evil spirit of envy, hatred, etc. The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly. Like those who turned away from the Lord at the First Advent, declaring, "This is a hard saying," they walk no more with Him.

As there are some substances which are short and brittle, so are there some which have fibre, strength, endurance. The Lord chooses for Himself such characters as have the strong, enduring qualities—fortitude, patience, long-suffering, etc. Some there are who walk close to the Lord, who will not be driven from Him by any of the arts and wiles of the Adversary. They are such as are at heart fully the Lord's—not their own; they follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except the will of God. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline and testings during the present life, and by and by, as He has declared, "They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."—Revelation 3:4.

He who escapes all trials and temptations and difficulties has every reason to doubt that he is really in relationship to God as a son. If he were a son, the Lord would surely find it necessary to give him trials and difficulties. If he does not have these he should go to the Father and make sure that there is no impediment on his part—make sure that he has put himself in the proper place where he can be prepared for the Kingdom. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."—Hebrews 12:6.

7

Failures as "Stepping-Stones"

All will rejoice when the testings are over and we are accepted as overcomers, to share with the Lord in His Throne. But patience, trust and love must first do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, submissive and obedient to God. Let the good work go on! Let us rejoice if our trials have made us stronger in character, more humble and Christlike, more aware of our blemishes and imperfections, more watchful and earnest in our endeavors to correct them so far as possible.

Even the conflicts in which we have had only partial victory may have resulted in blessings to us. Even in those experiences where we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through the humiliation and the pain of defeat, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness in that direction, and a more fervent prayer for the Lord's sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus even failures may become "stepping-stones" by which we rise toward God and Heaven. Only through much tribulation shall we enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all. If, therefore, the Lord's people find themselves involved in tempations, tribulations, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say, These are evidences that the Lord is preparing me for a place in the Kingdom. This should give one courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh is suffering; but the new mind, the new will, has this joy; and the New Creature can rejoice, knowing that these trials are not for his harm, but for his good.—1 Peter 4:13.

A Way of Escape Provided

The Heavenly Father will with every temptation provide a way of escape. Hence when we find ourselves in difficulty we are to say, The Heavenly Father is permitting this trial—the Lord Jesus will help me, and so I will rejoice in the fact that the Lord will not allow me to be overthrown; for He has promised that all things shall work out for my good.

As our text expressly says: We are to count it all joy when we **fall** into temptations—not when we **walk** into them. We are not to seek temptation. In our own fallen condition and that of those around us, with the Adversary alert to harm us, we know that there will be plenty of temptations without our walking into them. But if we fall into temptation we are to say, I have been striving against this thing, but the Lord has permitted it; and there must, therefore, come some blessing out of it for me. Even temptations that come through negligence are not to be disesteemed. Some of our greatest lessons in **carefulness** have resulted from the effect of our own **carelessness**.

Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Word and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. The Lord wants those who will endure a great fight of afflictions, who will endure patiently, though the temptations continue long and the tribulations become more and more severe. But if they should lose faith, all their previous good resolutions and standing for what is right would not make them overcomers.

These trials are intended to develop in us patience—that this quality may be deeply ingrained. We are building character for all eternity; and patience could not be thus developed and maintained except by repeated difficulties, tests—by our resolving again and again to be stronger and firmer in building the character-likeness of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

A Word of Warning

To those who are of this anointed company and who are striving to attain the glory promised to the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter issues a word of warning. In the first chapter of his second Epistle, he urges the Church to add quality after quality of character-preparation, that thus they may be fitted for the glorious things that God has promised to the faithful. He specifies **faith** as the primary qualification. To this he says that we are to add fortitude, knowledge, patience, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness and a generous love for all mankind. The reason why the Scriptures declare that our judgment will be according to our **faith** is that while in the flesh we shall never be able to perform **works** such as God could approve.

What God approves is the New Creature. By exercising faith and by demonstrating loyalty these New Creatures will be able to please Him, and to work out the proper character as enjoined in His Word, developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. "If **ye do these things**," says the Apostle, "ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Faith is necessary **all along the line.** Without faith we could not have courage to go on. If we did not have faith what would be our source of encouragement? The fall mentioned in the text above quoted (2 Peter 1:10), is evidently a fall from the position to which we have been invited and to which invitation we respond. We were called to be joint-heirs with our Lord. If we are obedient to the Word of the Lord and are properly exercised by the experiences which are given us in the School of Christ, we shall gain His approval; for "Faithful is He that hath called us." If there is a fall in our case, it will be due to failure to do our part. If we fail to cultivate character, we shall fail to gain the Kingdom.

Causes Inducing a Fall

Among those who fall some will fall more seriously than others. Those who fail to go on will receive certain tests which will determine whether they will turn back to the world or will continue in the narrow way. Some will fail in that they will not manifest sufficient zeal. These will come through great tribulations. If by these experiences they are brought to a full loyalty to the Lord, they will be granted everlasting life, but not on so high a plane as if they had not failed in their manifestation of zeal for the Lord, and of faith, energy and perseverance in doing the Lord's will.

Again, from lack of zeal in the Lord's service or from cultivating a spirit of bitterness, one may deteriorate until he becomes an enemy of the Lord, loving sin rather than righteousness. As an opponent of God such a one would suffer a complete fall. But those who have a temporary fall, but who afterwards overcome in the trials which the Lord will allow to come upon them, thus showing their loyalty to Him, will be fully recovered. Those who fall utterly can never be recovered. Such will lose **everything.** They had sacrificed their **human** hopes before they could be accepted at first; therefore their falling away from this condition of a New Creature will be a hopeless fall.

The fall of such will be far worse than the fall of Adam, whose fall resulted from having only limited knowledge and from lack of experience in the results of evil, for these have come to a clear knowledge of the Truth and have experienced a share in the redemption. The falling away of such would mean a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation—of destruction as enemies of God. Adam had only a small knowledge of the grace of God, and therefore is to be redeemed and ultimately restored, if he shall come into harmony with God.

Dear brethren, let us take heed to our ways. Let us earnestly cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, that we may indeed be presented "**faultless** before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

"'From glory unto glory' that ever lies before,
Still wondering, adoring, rejoicing more and more;
Still following where He leadeth, from shining field to field,
Himself the goal of glory, Revealer and revealed!

"Then let our hearts be surely fixed where truest joys are found,
And let our burning, loving praise yet more and more abound;
And gazing on the 'things not seen' eternal in the skies,
'From glory unto glory,' O Savior, let us rise!"

—Z. '14:149, 150.

◆

Those who have cultivated that spirit of love which "thinketh no evil" have developed their characters and have become of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." (Isa. 11:3.) They will be **cautious** where there is even the appearance of evil, while at the same time they will avoid the imputation of evil intentions until forced to concede them by indisputable evidence. It is far better to take some slight risks and to suffer some trifling losses than to accuse even one innocent person. The Lord, who has directed our course in matters of this kind, is abundantly able to compensate us for any losses experienced in following His counsel.—Z. '12:335.

◆

Prejudice is a weed which may flourish in comparatively well-kept heart-gardens. But it should always be plucked up as soon as discovered, or it will do damage—no one can tell how much—to the owner of the garden and to his neighbors.—Z. '11: 149.

"Peace, Be Still"

A Storm at Sea

Text, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"—Mark 4:38.

IN OUR text we have the despairing cry of the apostles to the Lord, in the midst of what must have been a remarkably severe storm on the Sea of Galilee. Some of the disciples, at least, were experienced fishermen, accustomed to the sudden squalls for which that sea is noted. For such courageous men as Peter, James and John to appeal to Jesus for superhuman aid implies that the conditions were critical. It seems rather astonishing indeed that our Lord could have slept under such strenuous conditions, but he was extremely exhausted from speaking to large multitudes and the journey was made in considerable measure to get away from the people, in order that he might have necessary rest. But again, it is possible that our Lord feigned sleep for the very purpose of permitting his disciples to reach the point of extremity which led them to call for his aid; because man's extremity is God's opportunity. The Master arose and rebuked the wind, saying, "Peace, be still." And there was a great calm. And he said to the disciples, Why are ye so fearful? Have ye not yet faith?

This expression constitutes one of the great lessons of the Master to his pupils, his disciples, and it has come ringing down the centuries, speaking peace to his followers ever since. The message it brings is that he who is able to control the storms and the sea is likewise able to govern all the affairs of life in the interests of those who are his consecrated followers, his disciples. Whether we have had so remarkable an escape from a storm at sea or not, I am sure that some of us have had the Master's supervision and intervention for our protection from the storms of life. To some of our hearts he has spoken these same words, "Peace, be still. Have ye not yet faith?" And with the message came a great calm, a great serenity, a great rest in the Lord and his superabundant care. If for a time the Master seemed unconscious of our condition and asleep to the dangers about us, it was only seemingly so. His care and his power were equally with us, and none could really harm our interests as New Creatures. He whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps, keeps watch over the interests of those who are truly his; and he is pledged that all things shall work together for good to them; because they love him.

The Province of Faith

In our judgment the Lord was not specially condemning the apostles for fearing the storm and awakening him to quell it. Indeed, their action indicates that they had faith; that they believed that the Master had the power which could save them. The Lord would have them exercise a still better faith than this. He would have them realize the Father's care as he had taught them, saying, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father? . . . Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew x, 29-31). The lesson sought to be inculcated was this: "The Father has called you to be my disciples and colaborers. You with myself, therefore, are specially under Divine guidance and supervision. And he who has begun the good work in you is able to care for all your interests, both temporal and spiritual. Do you suppose that, after calling you to the ministry of his grace, he would permit you to perish? To so fear, implies that you do not realize your calling to have been of God, or do not realize the Divine power, or that you doubt Divine wisdom and supervision—being of insufficient faith."

Shall we not similarly judge ourselves, scrutinize our own hearts, inquire within, if in the midst of the storms and tempests of life we become terrified? Would not this imply that we doubt the Divine providences in our own cases in the past and that we are uncertain as respects our calling of the Lord to be followers of the Lamb, sharers in the sufferings of Christ now and heirs of the glory that shall follow? Or would it mean that we lacked faith, lacked confidence in God? Perhaps no other lesson is more important for God's children to learn than this—to have absolute confidence in their Father's Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power.

We Walk by Faith

The Apostle remarks of the Church of this age, "We walk by faith and not by sight." In this respect the Gospel Church is different from the Jewish Church of the preceding age and different from the Millennial Church of the oncoming age. The latter will walk by sight. The Sun of Righteousness will shine forth, we are assured, and scatter all the darkness of ignorance, superstition and prejudice, and flood the world with the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God." There will be no more walking by the light of the lamp, the Bible, so precious to us now, so necessary to us now as a lamp to our feet and as a light to our footsteps to assist us in walking in the "narrow way" by faith and not by sight.

The Jewish Church of the preceding age was privileged to walk considerably by sight, not so clear and distinct a light as that which will illuminate the world in the Millennium, but, nevertheless, they walked by sight, because the Divine terms were that if they obeyed God's Word and walked in his statutes he would bless them in basket and store and flock and herd and in their families and in their hearts. And the assurance was that if there was any calamity it would be because of their departure from the Lord and would mark his disfavor.

But during the Gospel Age how different! Whoever would be God's child, a follower of Jesus, in the present time must walk by faith and not by sight. He must believe what he cannot see. He must learn that the cost of discipleship, the cost of sonship in the Divine family means self-sacrifice, a narrow way, opposition and persecution. "Yea, whoever will live godly in this present world will suffer persecution." Instead of being blessed above other men in their temporal affairs the consecrated, the sanctified, have the Scriptural assurance that they must expect the reverse. Instead of being kept in perfect health many of the Lord's followers have had sad experiences on beds of sickness and pain. Instead of being wealthy it was foretold that there would be not many rich amongst them, not many great, not many wise according to the course of this world, but that the riches they must esteem are the riches of God's grace associated with the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. Instead of being surrounded by conditions of affluence, wealth and ease their circumstances are generally the reverse of these. And why is this so? Because the Lord is now choosing "peculiar people." . . .

"A Peculiar People"

The Lord's people are peculiar in their dress—not as respects their outward clothing, but as respects their robe of Christ's Righteousness—theirs by imputation, because of faith in the blood of Christ, faith in his sacrifice for sins. They are peculiar also in that they have a "wedding garment" which they wear continually and which they seek to keep "unspotted from the world" and which they trust by and by will admit their entrance with their Lord to the great Marriage Supper when they, as members of the Bride-Elect, shall become the Queen of Glory, Joint-Heirs with the Bridegroom.

These are peculiar also in that they love Righteousness and hate iniquity, whereas the majority of people love iniquity and are ready to indulge in it to the extent that they would not be caught or seriously injured. These, on the contrary, love Righteousness because they have come to esteem it as the character of their Heavenly Father and his will respecting them, and they have come to hate iniquity because they have learned of its injuriousness and that the Heavenly Father is not pleased with inequity, injustice, wrong in any form. These peculiar people are so desirous of pleasing the Heavenly Father that they are quite willing to be thought peculiar or strange to the world in general that they may hear by and by the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matthew XXV., 23).

"O Ye of Little Faith"

All the circumstances and affairs of life, its storms and its calms, its joys and its sorrows, its ups and its downs, its pleasures and its pains, are so ordered of the Father's providence as to give these "peculiar people" the lessons they most need, primarily to develop in them this quality of faith, and secondarily the various graces of the Lord's spirit, which can be built only upon this faith, this trust, this confidence. And as the members of this class learn to take the proper view of the Lord's dealings, learn to have faith in him, learn to note his providences and to trust his promises, proportionately it is their privilege to have peace and rest in every time of storm and distress. As the Master declares, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John XIV., 27). B.S.M. Vol. 9:2:3.

All Things Work for Good to Them

Genesis 46: 28-34; 47:12, 28-31.

"To them that love God all things work together for good."
—Romans 8:28.

JACOB and all his family left the land of Canaan, the Land of Promise, Palestine; and, at the invitation of Pharaoh through Joseph, they located in the land of Goshen, suitable to their business which was that of herdsmen and shepherds. Joseph went in his chariot to Goshen, and there met his father Jacob, whom he had not seen for many years. After the custom of oriental countries, they kissed each other, and Joseph wept. Then came the official presentation of Jacob and his family to Pharaoh. Joseph was careful that they should make no mistake. He therefore let the king clearly know that their occupation was that of shepherds and herdsmen; for the Egyptians despised that business, and hence would keep themselves separate from the Hebrews. Thus the land of Goshen became almost like a separate country from Egypt.

Jacob at this time was one hundred thirty years old, and quite feeble. Brought into the presence of Pharaoh, Jacob blessed him—in the sense of asking the Divine blessing upon him, we may assume. Thus the family of Jacob, now called by their new name, Israel, became firmly established in the land of Egypt. Jacob lived seventeen years thereafter, during which Joseph and his people, the Israelites, were in favor with Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Our lesson relates especially to God's willingness and ability to make all the experiences of His people to work out for their good. This naturally suggests that we inquire in what way Jacob's life experiences were to his welfare. The Scriptures declare, "Jacob have I loved; Esau have I hated [loved less]." God's Love should be distinctly seen manifested in some way in making matters work for good to Jacob and his family. The question is, How? Can we see the lines along which Divine favor operated for the welfare of Jacob and his family?

Only with the eye of faith, guided by the words of Jesus, His Apostles and the Prophets, can we see how God's blessing was with Israel and gave them blessings more than others. Many have not this eye of faith. Hence only the few can see, appreciate, understand this matter. The majority both of professing Christians and of Jews fail to see what blessing came to Israel. Proportionately such are weak in faith, and quite ready to be turned aside by Higher Critics and Evolutionists into total unbelief in the Bible and the Divine Plan of the Ages which it sets forth.

Jacob, having become the heir of the great Promise made to Abraham (in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed), straightway seems to have gotten into trouble. He fled from home, leaving everything to his brother. He served his uncle Laban for seven years, that he might have Rachel for his wife, but Divine Providence permitted him to be cheated, and he was obliged to serve seven years more for her. Time and again his uncle Laban changed his wages in an endeavor to get the best of him. Thus Jacob was thrown into competition with his uncle in the endeavor to protect his own interests.

Finally, with the fruit of many years' toil, he returned to Canaan, fearful, however, of his brother Esau, whom he placated with a rich present. Later, he lost his wife and was bereft of Joseph, his beloved son. Then came the famine and the recovery of Joseph. Later on, the move into Egypt appeared to have been a disastrous one, for the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites. Finally, they were delivered, only to have trying experiences in the wilderness of Paran for forty years, before entering Canaan proper.

How Did God Bless Israel?

Then it was a gradual matter to get possession of the land. They had various trials and difficulties, captivities to the Philistines, the Syrians, etc. Later on, they had kings, and then a rebellion, or division of the Kingdom, followed by more wars, famines, pestilences, until they were all carried captive into Babylon. They went away numerous, they returned a comparatively small company. Then they had more trials, wars, etc.

By and by, Jesus came, and was repudiated by all except the few. Then the nation was repudiated by God. "Your house is left unto you desolate." Gradually trouble and anarchy came upon them, until as a nation they went to Hades—nationally they fell asleep. They have been asleep for more than eighteen centuries, while personally they have endured persecutions in many nations.

What we want to see is how God's blessing was identified with all those experiences of Israel. We want to know in what way God overruled for their good and blessing more than in the affairs of other nations. To understand this, we must take a glance at other nations and peoples and their experiences and then must look also into the future.

Where is Egypt—where is the government of the Pharaohs today? Where is Assyria—where are their peoples today? Where are the Philistines? Where are any and all of the nations who flourished in the days of Israel? The answer is that they are no more. They have merged with other peoples or have been blotted out by natural processes. They could not be restored today, because none of those peoples remain anywhere. We are not discussing the numerous tribes of India, nor the consolidated bands of China and Japan, nor the barbarous tribes of Africa. These all have been outside the line of our history, because not closely identified with the nation of Israel, Natural or Spiritual.

But Israel exists today. . . . Their awakening is already arousing "dry bones" from despair, and pointing forward to a future day of blessing and prosperity. One result of God's providential care over Israel has been that as a people they have been maintained in existence. It is this hope of future blessings, based upon God's promise to Abraham, which continues to vitalize that people. It is this hope which by and by, according to prophecy, will re-vitalize Israel, and again bring her forward and identify her with the great Messianic Kingdom; which will bless the world.

But some one may say, Tell us not about national blessings, for we shall have to think of the whole world from the standpoint of one human brotherhood. If Israel has been blessed of God, there should be some personal blessing manifest and not merely a national prolongation of grace, in their life as a people.

Very true, we answer. There are both personal and national blessings of the past and for the future. God's dealings with Israel in the past did not indeed prove all of that nation to be holy, saintly, and worthy of the highest honor and stations in the Divine Programme. But those providences served to select in that nation a peculiar people, of similar characteristics to those possessed by Abraham: viz., faith and obedience. Following Abraham came Isaac; following Isaac came Jacob; and following Jacob came the nation of Israel amongst whom there were a few, from time to time, worthy of being ranked with their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The trying experiences of centuries of national life tended to develop noble characters, strong in faith and loyal to the core. St. Paul enumerates some of these besides Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Prophets. He includes with them all those "Israelites indeed" who were loyal to God to the extent of suffering persecutions for righteousness' sake and for the sake of the hopes which they received through that Abrahamic Promise. Some of these, he says, were "stoned to death, some were sawn asunder . . . of whom the world was not worthy."

This selecting process continued down to the time of Jesus, and found a glorious company, even if it were not a numerous one. God was seeking such people, and He found the ones whom He sought. True, they have not yet received their reward. True, their reward is not to be a Heavenly one, but an earthly one as was promised them. "All the land that thou seest will I give to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

These faithful ones of Israel are the ones for whom all things have been working together favorably—because they loved God, because they were responsive to the righteousness which He set before them and to the great Promise which He gave them. The time is near at hand, we believe, when these will constitute Messiah's earthly representatives in the ruling and blessing of the world of mankind.

What was prophesied of them before will be fulfilled. Instead of being the fathers, they will be Messiah's children, receiving everlasting life from Him as a Father. He will make them princes in all the earth, in subordinate co-operation with His

Heavenly Empire. (Psalm 45:16.) Thus we see that all the trials and difficulties of Israel were, under Divine Providence, working together for good to that special class, "Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile," and who loved God supremely. And their reward is nigh at hand. Through them, the blessing will extend to every nation of earth.

Spiritual Israel's Experiences

When God's time came, at the First Advent, to call out from the world a special class of Spiritual Israelites, He gave the first opportunity to the children of Jacob. As many of them at that time as were "Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile," were privileged to have special opportunities and instructions from Jesus. All of that true, loyal class were enabled by special providential guidance and instruction, to recognize Him as the Messiah, while all others were blinded by prejudice, superstition and obscure statements.

This was another advantage that came to the natural seed of Abraham—that they should have the first opportunity of becoming members of Spiritual Israel, of which they had previously had no information whatever. Nor have they yet learned that The Messiah for whom they were waiting is to be a Spiritual Messiah, instead of a fleshly one, and that He is to be a composite Messiah, instead of a single person—that He is to be composed of many members.

Thus the natural children of Abraham had "much advantage every way, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God," and because having those oracles, those prophecies, they had the best opportunity of all people of knowing respecting Messiah and of coming into harmony with Him, becoming His disciples.

But as was said of Natural Israel, so with still greater emphasis it might be said of Spiritual Israel, that their privileges brought to them special sufferings and persecutions. Jesus was buffeted, all manner of evil was said against Him falsely, and He was finally crucified as a criminal, because He averred that He was the Son of God and did not deny that He was the One who ultimately would be the King of Glory.

Then for centuries the faithful followers of Jesus had bitter experiences. Sometimes they were literally tortured, literally persecuted, literally flayed alive. At other times they suffered symbolical persecution, symbolical flaying alive, and had all manner of evil spoken against them falsely for Christ's sake. Deceptions, false doctrines, and antitypical carrying into symbolical Babylon—all these have been experiences of the people of God. Nor does this close the list; for St. Paul declared, "Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." So whoever today belongs to the Lord has the assurance that if he is faithful to his Master, he will have the opposition of Satan, of the world and of his own flesh.

The questions arise, How are these things working better for us than for the world? Do not Christians die the same as unbelievers, the same as Jews, the same as Mohammedans, the same as the heathen? Do they not have their share of sickness, sorrow, and pain in connection with their dying experiences? Surely none can dispute the truthfulness of this suggestion! Wherein then, shall we say, is there an advantage in being a Spiritual Israelite? If all the world is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, if all the world is to have a blessing under Messiah's glorious reign of a thousand years, and if the Ancient Worthies are to have the first place in the Kingdom that will then be established under the whole heavens, what will be the advantage, if any, to those who have been faithful and loyal Spiritual Israelites—to those who have endured hardness as good soldiers and have sought to lay down their lives in the Master's service, in the service of the brethren, in the service of the Truth, in the service of God?

Much Advantage Every Way Is Ours

The advantages of this class are numerous, and lay hold upon the present life, as well as that which is to come. In the present time, it is the privilege of these to enjoy the peace of God, which passeth all human understanding. It is their privilege to know by faith that all things are working together for good to them because they love God. It is their privilege to realize that whatever may happen to others in the world, nothing can **happen,** so far as they are concerned. Their affairs and interests are all subject to a Divine supervision. No wonder they can have peace in every storm! No wonder they are able to rejoice even in tribulation!

Theirs is a joy of spirit, of which no earthly experience can rob them, and their joys increase daily, yearly, as they ripen in Christian experience, and as they grow in knowledge and in grace. Theirs is a privilege of access to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, and a privilege of communion with the Heavenly Father and with their Lord Jesus Christ. They may count themselves, as St. Peter declares, members of the Royal Priesthood, the Holy Nation of Israel, the Peculiar People of God. . . . Oh, great are the privileges and mercies and blessing of these Spiritual Israelites, far more than compensating for their disciplines, tribulations and oppositions!

Joys of the Life to Come

But beyond all these experiences of the present life lie the riches of God's grace for the future, which these possess and hold with the power of faith. As St. Paul declares, they have the "promise of the life which now is and also of that which is to come." And that life to come is such a wonderful life that the study of it is an endless matter. Every step of obedience brings them rights and privileges with God, brings them a step forward also in knowledge of Himself and of His glorious Plan. Thus the more saintly and self-sacrificing the character, the deeper may be his knowledge, the richer his experiences, the more precious his hopes and anticipations.

Are we asked, What are the anticipations of this class? The answer is, They anticipate the things which God has promised; they anticipate that as they are now children of God, so their promised resurrection from the dead to full spiritual perfection will make them sons of God on the highest plane. And if children, then they will be "heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, their Lord." Besides, these Spiritual Israelites are heirs of a Spiritual Canaan, a Spiritual Kingdom. To enter upon their Kingdom they must needs experience the powers of a better resurrection than others. And this will mean, the Apostle assures us, that they will "be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." Is it not true then, in the fullest and most absolute sense, that all things are working together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to His purpose, not only to those who were called during the Jewish Age, but also to those who have been called and who have accepted the call during this Gospel Age!—Z. '13:152-154.

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JUSTICE A PART OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Question—In Proverbs 16:11 we read, "A just weight and balance are the Lord's." Should we not, therefore, seek to develop the characteristic of love, rather than of justice, leaving the matter of justice until such times as we shall be perfected and enthroned, and thus be enabled to act upon the principle of justice, the foundation of God's throne?

Answer—We should apprehend the principle of justice now without waiting until we are made perfect. We should seek to note the operation of divine justice and the operations of justice and injustice in humanity, with special notice and criticism of ourselves. He who fails to appreciate justice must of necessity proportionately fail to appreciate mercy, for mercy is merely the difference between love and justice. We are to seek to note the principle of justice in our dealings with others, and to "deal justly and keep judgment," as the Lord directs, but we are to compensate for our own imperfection and the imperfection of others by permitting love to govern, and to cover all the multitude of faults in those with whom we have to do. Nevertheless, we are to seek to view our own conduct in the light of justice, and with as few allowances as possible for our own imperfections.—Z. '05:287.

◆

The more loyal we are, the more faithful we are, the fewer slips we shall make, the more like our Redeemer we shall be, and the brighter will be our reward, for as the Apostle declares, "As star differeth from star in glory, so also is The Resurrection of the Dead."—Z. '13:126.

◆

THE SPIRIT OF GOD'S REQUIREMENT IS MERCY

The fault-finding disposition, that is ready to accuse and condemn everybody, indicates a wrong condition of heart—one which all the Lord's people should be on guard against. It is not the spirit of mercy and kindness and love which, as the Apostle explains, thinketh no evil. It is a spirit out of harmony with God's disposition, for, as our Lord explains, God desires mercy rather than slaughter; and those who are ready to condemn others give evidence that they lack the Lord's spirit of mercy and forgiveness.

This was the offense which our Lord charged against two of his noblest disciples in the early part of their discipleship. When the people of Samaria refused to sell the disciples food, because the Lord did not stop with them and perform miracles amongst them, as he was doing amongst the Jews, the disciples, James and John, were indignant, and said to the Lord, "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and destroy these men and their city?" but Jesus answered, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them." So with all of the Lord's disciples: their continual study should be to avoid that hypercritical disposition to sentence and to destroy other people while desiring mercy for themselves. The rule which the Lord establishes is that we must expect from him mercy only in proportion as we shall exercise this grace toward others.

Loveless Criticism Perverts the Mind

As illustrating this tendency to fault-finding and how it grows upon one, a story is told of a young lady who once expressed to Hogarth, the great satirist, a wish to learn to draw caricatures. Hogarth replied, "Alas, it is not a faculty to be envied. Take my advice and never draw a caricature. By the long practice of it I have lost the enjoyment of beauty. I never see a face but distorted, and have never the satisfaction to behold the human face divine." So it is with those who unsympathetically practice fault-finding and criticising others' faults; they become so proficient in the matter that they never see good qualities, but merely the deficiencies. Their own happiness is thus injured, as well as the happiness of others. It is well that we should be able to note defects—that we should not be blind to them entirely; but remember that we ourselves are most profited in noticing in others whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are reputable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, rather than by noticing and thinking upon their defects and ignoble qualities.—Z. '04:43.

◆

The more we study and understand the Divine Plan, the greater will be the operation of the holy power of God in our hearts. The deeper our consecration, the more sympathy shall we have with all the purposes of the Lord and the more fervently shall we desire to do the Divine good pleasure.—Z. '16:227.

◆

Let all the Sons of God remember the importance of honesty, "truth in the inward parts," when they come together as members of the body of Christ, to study the divine Word, and to help one another, and "let nothing be done through strife or vain glory." . . . Thus let personal humility and love of the brethren keep pace with our growth in knowledge of divine things; otherwise let us be assured that we are in the sifting and separating time, and that all who have not this spirit of humility, patience, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love, will surely be separated.—1 Jno. 2:19; Q. '99:1:16.

◆

Gratitude is one of the Divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which therefore should be carefully cultivated. It is this element of character in man which makes fellowship and communion with God possible. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation, if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting His goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out His love or to inspire love in us. But since it is for the Divine pleasure that we are and were created, God has endowed His intelligent creatures with this element of character which, being responsive to His own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with Himself: and this fellowship is the chief end of existence, both on the side of the creature and on that of the Creator.—Rev. 4:11.

Viewed from this standpoint, thankfulness of heart is a very sure sign of the character which God is seeking, especially in matters pertaining to our great salvation. Yet amongst all those who have been justified by faith—cleansed from their iniquities and covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness—how few, comparatively, there are who carry out in full their consecration of themselves to God—their reasonable service. Only the truly thankful are constrained to do so—only the truly appreciative. Let us each and all seek to cultivate more and more the spirit of thankfulness, the "reasonable" spirit or disposition. Thankfulness will make every trial and sacrifice on our part seem small and proportionately easy to be offered; and it will make all of God's mercies and favors toward us proportionately grand, great and inspiring.—Z. '17:232.

◆

Conviction that our work is of Divine authority is a power of itself in the heart of any man or woman.—Z. '15:9.

◆

SACRIFICE OUR SPECIAL MISSION

Each member of the Royal Priesthood is to remember that the special mission of our office, our vocation, our calling, in the present time is to sacrifice. One form of service frequently not discerned by the Lord's people is the opportunity of renouncing our own desires or plans, our own methods or preferences, and in the interests of peace accepting instead the plans, the desires, the preferences of others—where it is merely a matter of personal preference. Where we believe the Lord will be as well pleased to have the matter the one way or the other, a yielding of our own wishes often proves a blessing, both to the one yielding and to the one receiving the kindness and consideration. This is the spirit of love, the spirit of the Master.

In the Body of Christ the different members have their various inherited weaknesses against which they must wage a lifelong warfare; and these weaknesses are sometimes of such a nature as to interfere to some extent with the rights and comforts of others as well as of themselves. And just here the Apostle offers the word of counsel, "We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." This does not imply that we should not expostulate with such a one and endeavor to help him to get rid of his infirmity. This we should do. in the spirit of meekness and kindness, while we humbly endure the trial of our patience. It is his good that we are to seek, not chiefly our own greater enjoyment of physical or mental comfort. We are to please him for **his edification**, not by simply ignoring his fault, as though we considered it right, but if there be suitable opportunity, by kindly urging him to strive against it, still humbly and patiently submitting to the discomfort it brings to us.—Z. '14:311.

◆

We should not be always looking to see if our own personal matters are being impinged. We know that we, as well as others, have imperfections. If others inadvertently tread upon our toes, we know that we are likely to sometimes tread on others' toes. But personal matters are different from those that belong to the family or to the office. It is not busybodying to report violations of the rules of the house or of the office. It is to the interests of every member of a family or an institution that the interests of the whole body be looked after, in a proper and reasonable way.—Z. '14:265.

◆

The Lord's people have a peace and rest of mind through the knowledge of the Lord's Plan, the knowledge of His Justice, Mercy and Love, and a blessed realization that He is **our** God. All these things give us peace and quiet and rest of mind. While the world are troubled more or less, God's children have a peace that the world knows not of, that the world can neither give nor take away. And when the trials are all over, the Lord will make up for all the troubles of the present time, for all His children have suffered. We shall then look back on these trials and consider them but light afflictions, only for a moment.—2 Corinthians 4:17; Z. '14:53.

◆

Those who come into heart harmony with the Lord, and who are cleansed by obedience to His message and its spirit, are thereby made clean every whit—outwardly, as well as inwardly. It is safe to say that every one who is pure in heart will, according to his circumstances and opportunities, seek to be clean in person, in speech, in every way. The principle working in his heart will exercise an influence upon all his words and thoughts and doings—all his days and all his hours.—Z. '14:27.

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J. A. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 105

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"If God Be for Us Who Can Be Against Us?"

Romans 8:31.

WHAT wonderful thoughts these words arouse! God **for** us! God on **our** side! It means almighty wisdom enlisted in our interest, almighty power to be exerted on our behalf, almighty love and infinite goodness watching over us and caring for and helping us. What immeasurable lengths and breadths, heights and depths of infinite grace are here so forcibly and so concisely set before the mind!

But we notice a limitation: The Apostle's suggestion is not that God is for every one, but for **"us."** To whom does he refer by this word "us?" Is it possible that divine love and energy, wisdom and power are not being exerted on behalf of the world, but only on behalf of the Church in this present time? . . .

All the "saints" throughout the whole world, are probably altogether not a great multitude; but rather, comparatively, a "little flock": yet each one of these may say to himself, and realize to the very bottom of his heart as applicable to himself, these wonderful words—God is **for us.** He may endeavor to grasp the significance of these words, but he will surely fail to get all of their wonderful meaning. It is not possible for the human mind to grasp the riches of divine grace and love and power. We cannot comprehend them, we can merely apprehend them. If God be **for us,** with all of his infinite wisdom and power, it implies also that Christ is for us, for he is one with the Father; it implies also that all the angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the heavenly powers of our knowledge and beyond our knowledge are **for us**—all enlisted upon our side, to do us good, to help us, to succor us in time of need, to uphold us in time of temptation, to strengthen us to do the Father's will. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The view granted to Elisha's servant, of countless horses, chariots and horsemen of fire or like fire, was of course merely a **vision,** nevertheless it represented a truth—that divine power is round about God's people on every hand for their protection and their deliverance. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that are his and delivereth them." "Are they [the angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) Our Lord expressed the same thing, saying of his "faithful followers": "Their angels [messengers] do always behold the face of my Father." It matters not whether we shall understand this to signify that spirit beings continually surround those called to be the "elect" of the Lord, to guide and shape their interests for their highest good, or whether we shall understand it to be merely a figure of speech, signifying that divine power surrounds God's people; for the results would be the same; it matters not by which means the Lord would deliver them from the evil and help them in trial and adversity. The fact that God is "for us," and that he is making all things work together for good to those who love him, is the central thought, the essence, the strength of this message to "us."

How wonderful is all this! Let us cast our minds for a moment over the world with its fifteen hundred millions of inhabitants. Let us remember that they are all under the "curse," under the sentence of divine displeasure, except the few who have heard of the redemption—of the Way, the Truth and the Life—and who have by faith and obedience "escaped the condemnation that is on the world" and come back into harmony with the Father and into fellowship with his Son. Let us imagine, if we can, this "little flock" of the "honored," "justified" and "called," heaven-led and heaven-blessed, scattered here and there amongst the fifteen hundred million fellow-creatures. Oh, what joy, what comfort, what peace, what strength the thought must bring to each one who can realize that he has taken all of the steps thus far, and that he is still pressing "down upon the mark for the prize of the high calling!" This joy is not dimmed, but is greatly enhanced, by the thought that soon, in conformity with God's gracious foreordination all the "elect" may have a share in the great work of blessing with the knowledge of the True Light the masses who are yet in darkness, "without God and having no hope" in him. For although a redemption has been provided for all, the knowledge of God's grace has not yet reached any but the favored or "honored" minority.

As the Apostle declares in this very same chapter (Rom. 8:22), it is indeed a groaning creation; it has been groaning ever since the sentence of divine wrath was expressed in Eden, and it must continue to groan until the great Deliverer shall have established his Kingdom, and shall have rolled back the "curse" of death and depravity. Oh, what riches of grace have come to **"us"** through Jesus Christ, our Lord! And yet, as the Apostle says, although we have all this blessing and favor, we have also with it certain trials, difficulties and painful experiences, which the Father sees necessary for our development in order that we may come up to the terms of his predestination, "copies of his Son." And in consequence of this, as the Apostle declares, "We ourselves also [as well as the whole creation] groan within ourselves [while suffering **with** the world we suppress the groan, "We lay our burdens at his feet and bear a song away"] waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our Body"—"the Body of Christ," the elect Church.

The word **if** in this text does not signify a doubt or question on the subject; but quite the reverse. The Apostle has given the evidence that God is for **"us,"** in the preceding verses, and now uses **if** as though he said, If I have proved that God is for us, then who can be against us!

"Who Can Be Against Us?"

Who can be against us, if God is for us? The Apostle does not mean that, having God on our side, none would dare to oppose our way. Quite to the contrary, we have bitter enemies and relentless foes. Who are against us? Their name is legion. . . .

The Apostle was not ignoring all of these great adversaries which, like "roaring lions," would terrify us, and if possible arrest our progress in the path of consecration and sacrifice, which leads on to glory. This is not his thought when he says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Quite to the contrary, his thought is, that **notwithstanding** all these things which are against us, we may realize that God is **for us**, that he has predestinated a Church in glory and has justified and called us to be members of it, and brought us on the journey thus far, through all of these various steps. And if we can realize that God has thus been leading us up to the present time, to bring us to share his glory, and that all things thus far have been working for our good, this is our assurance that **all** wisdom, power and love shall be exerted on our behalf down to the very end, if we continue to abide in Christ faithfully.

What shall we fear? What could oppose our way so as to hinder it, if God be on our side? This reminds us of the adage, "God with one is a majority." So, God with us, and for us, and leading us, makes us mighty indeed, stronger than all these adversaries with all their arts and wiles and perversity, and able through his grace to come off conquerors, yea, more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood.—Z '08: 227-231.

Hated Without a Cause

Genesis 37.

"Love Envieth Not."—1 Corinthians 13: 4.

THE story of Joseph and his brethren, beautiful in its simplicity as a narrative, is deeply interesting and instructive, from various viewpoints. One lesson would be the unwisdom of a parent in showing too great a preference for one child above another, and thus cultivating amongst the children a spirit of envy. Another lesson would be along the line of the unwisdom of telling even our dreams to unsympathetic ears: as when Joseph told his dreams to his brethren. In the one dream, he saw eleven shocks of wheat bow down to one shock, which was his. In the other dream, he saw the sun, the moon and the eleven stars all doing homage to him.

Joseph was not to be blamed for having these dreams. Unlike the majority of dreams, they apparently came not from indigestion, but were from the Lord. Joseph was not even to blame for artlessly telling the dream to his brethren; and evidently this was the very thing which the Lord intended should be done. The Lord foreknew the jealousy of Joseph's brethren, and how envy would be cultivated in their minds; and He gave the opportunity for it; for He had already mapped out Joseph's subsequent experiences, which the envy of his brethren merely helped to accomplish.

We may, however, learn the lesson that in general it is the part of wisdom to keep to one's self truths not necessary for another to know which might merely arouse opposition. Jesus encouraged this very thought, saying, "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they turn again and injure you." Very deep truths connected with the Divine Plan and with Christian hopes had better not be told to others than those for whom they are intended by the Lord—namely, the meek.

Joseph a Type of Messiah

The most important feature of today's Bible Study is that which in addition to all that we have suggested, recognizes Joseph as a type, or prophetic picture of Christ, the Messiah. Joseph was kind to his brethren and was on an errand of mercy to them when their envy plotted his death, and later on sold him into slavery in Egypt. His brethren hated him without a cause—merely because he was good, because his father loved him, and because God in the dreams foreshadowed his coming exaltation.

Joseph's brethren should have said, "Let us rejoice that we have so noble a brother. Let us rejoice if it be God's will that he should be very highly exalted. God's Promise made to our grandfathers, Abraham and Isaac, and to our father Jacob, may thus be reaching a fulfilment. Let God's blessings come in whatever way He sees best. We will rejoice with our brother, as we see that he is pleasing to God and to our father Jacob. We will seek more and more to copy his character." But they were envious to the point of cruelty, first resolving to murder him, and later, merely as an alternative, to sell him as a slave.

"They Hated Him Without a Cause"

But God's providence continued with Joseph and blessed him as a slave, and through much tribulation finally brought him to the throne of Egypt—next in influence and power to Pharaoh himself. Then it was that the famine of the land drove Joseph's brethren to Egypt to buy wheat. Thus was fulfilled his dream—that his brethren bow down, as illustrated in the eleven sheaves which bowed down before his.

Later on when his father and the entire family came into Egypt to live in Goshen, they all did obeisance to Joseph, as the representative of the Egyptian Government, thus fulfilling the second dream. But all of these experiences were at the time dark. They all looked as though the Lord had less love for Joseph than for any others of his family, until the time came for his exaltation to the throne. Then everything changed.

"Which Things Are an Allegory"

The allegorical meaning of all this, as applied to Jesus, is that He was also hated without a cause. We read in Psalm 69:4, "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head." Jesus quoted this statement and applied it to Himself, saying, "They hated Me without a cause." (John 15:25.) The brethren of Jesus were the Jews, who crucified Him. But there was no cause of death found in Him.

We perceive that it was for envy that they delivered Him up and called for His crucifixion, because His works were good and theirs were evil; because he taught the way of the Lord more perfectly than they; because He declared to them that the time would come when they and all others would recognize Him as the Messiah—coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory—and would bow the knee to Him.

As with Joseph, disaster, treachery and shame prepared the way for glory and honor on the throne of Egypt, so with Jesus. His trying experiences proved Him loyal to God and led onward to His exaltation to the right hand of Divine Majesty. St. Paul refers to this, saying of Jesus, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2.) Again he says, "Though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9), even as the experiences of Joseph—all of his humiliation—prepared the way for him to be succored and honored by Pharaoh. Again we read of Jesus, that "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect [through suffering], He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those that obey Him."—Hebrews 5:9.

"If We Suffer With Him"

The Scriptures assure us that in God's great Plan, not only Jesus is to be exalted to the Throne as the world's Messiah, but with Him is to be a company of brethren, sharers of the same glory, honor and immortality. And these brethren, in God's great Purpose, are required to pass through similar experiences to those of their Elder Brother Jesus. Their experiences, therefore, are illustrated also in Joseph's experiences. They are not on an equality with their Elder Brother. He is designated their Head, their Chief, the Captain of their salvation. So we read again, that God, "in bringing many sons to glory, made the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."—Hebrews 2:10.

And all of the company of sons received under this great Captain must similarly be perfected through sufferings.

Does not this account for the trying experiences of the Church during the past nineteen centuries? The Apostle John declares, "As He was, so are we, in this world"; and again, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." As Joseph's brethren were blind to the fact that their brother would be their savior from famine, as well as the savior of the Egyptians, so the world fails to realize that only through The Messiah will any have eternal life.

In the very same connection in which Jesus mentions that He was hated without a cause, He plainly forewarns all of His elect followers that they must similarly expect to be hated unjustly. We read, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me. . . . But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, They hated Me without a cause."—John 15:18-25.

We give in full the same text from which our Lord quoted, "They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of Mine head . . . Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for My sake; let not those that seek Thee be confounded for My sake, O God of Israel. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach: shame hath covered My face. I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children. For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me. Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." — Psalm 69:4-9, 20, 21.

The Philosophy of the Facts

We have considered the facts—that Jesus and all of His followers, according to Divine intention, have suffered shame and contempt. We perceive that, in the case of Jesus and of the early Church, the persecution came from their brethren according to the flesh—from the Jews. And since then, all the way down the Gospel Age, the persecutions of the Church, the brethren of Jesus, the Household of Faith, have come from their brethren, too. These brethren are not Jews, but Christians. . . .

But what is the philosophy of these facts of history? Why has God permitted, yea, ordained that Christ should suffer, and that all who would walk in His steps must share in His experiences of ignominy and shame and reproach—suffering with Him? In Jesus' case, the Father used the trying experiences to test the love and loyalty of His Son, and to demonstrate His obedience to angels and to men. Intending to confer upon Him very great glory and honor, the Father would have all to see, as He saw it, the worthiness of the Logos, subsequently Jesus.

In a symbolical picture the Heavenly hosts are represented as acknowledging the propriety of the high exaltation of Jesus, because of His faithfulness unto death, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And if such a demonstration of the worthiness of Jesus, the Logos, was necessary or proper, much more necessary would it seem that an elect Church, being gathered from amongst a fallen race, should be proven loyal to God to the very last—even unto death. There is a difference, however.

In the case of the Master, it was a demonstration that He was perfect before He left the Heavenly glory, and perfect also when He became the Man Christ Jesus—"holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." "In Him was no sin." In the case of His followers, the imperfection of the flesh still remains; but they are judged, not according to the weaknesses of their flesh—of heredity—but according to the love and zeal of their hearts. And this loving zeal is witnessed to by their endeavor to walk faithfully in the footsteps of their Leader and Savior, overcoming to the best of their ability the weaknesses of their flesh.—Z. '13:107-109.

Afflicted, Yet a Comforter

Genesis 40 and 41

"God giveth grace to the humble."—1 Peter 5: 5.

JOSEPH may well be designated the model young man of Old Testament times. In some respects, he would be a model for any time. There is a distinction to be made, however. Joseph lived before the time of spirit-begetting. He lived before the time of Bibles, before the time of preaching and Sunday Schools. He merely inherited from his father a strong faith in the God of Abraham, who had promised that, ultimately, a blessing should come to all people through Jacob's posterity. Joseph, who was one of that family, reverenced God and sought to live humbly, nobly. His faithfulness to God and his trust in God's Promise served as a rudder to guide and direct all the affairs of his life. Whatsoever he did was with a view to pleasing God and winning His approval.

Such faithfulness was probably rare at that time, as it is today, and the reward came in Joseph's advancement to the highest station in the house of his master—that of steward. His conscientiousness led him to be careful, economical and wise; and his master could and did entrust everything to his care. Young men of Joseph's type are very much valued everywhere today—yea, they have been valued in every period of the world's history—trustworthy men, faithful men, economical men, wise men; and all these qualities go with godliness—with faith in God, and a realization of responsibility to Him.

But just in the height of Joseph's prosperity, calamity came. His steadfastness to principle angered his mistress. She falsely accused him; and he was cast into prison and made to appear guilty of a heinous crime, disloyal to his master and benefactor. Yet all the while he was innocent; but only God and himself knew of that innocence. The Adversary had made circumstantial evidence to appear so strong that Joseph's guilt was not questioned. The poet Shakespeare noted this trait of human weakness in these words: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

How strange it seems that God would allow so terrible a blight to fall upon the life of one who was seeking to walk in the ways of righteousness! We can imagine Joseph's querying why this evil had befallen him, and saying with the Prophet, "They that work wickedness are set up; yea they that tempt God are even delivered; while those who seek to live righteously suffer persecution."

But evidently Joseph did not permit himself to question the Wisdom of Divine Providence which took him to prison in Egypt any more than he allowed himself to question the Wisdom of the same Providence in permitting him to be sold a slave into Egypt. His faith in God endured the test. He became stronger as he found himself shut away from all earthly hopes and ambitions—dead to the world. The more did he cultivate faith in the Almighty; the more did he determine that at any cost he would live righteously, soberly, reverentially. Even in prison, his faithfulness, intelligence and general goodness were recognized. He became the prison keeper's trusty man and assistant. Such a character, no matter how much traduced, misrepresented and slandered, eventually will commend itself to those with whom it has close contact. And the principle holds good today, as then.

Dreams of Butler and Baker

The prison regulations of old were less methodical than at present. Joseph had been in prison for years, had probably been forgotten, and might have continued there indefinitely, had not something occurred to bring his case to official notice. When he was twenty-eight years old, two high officials were thrust into prison because Pharaoh had taken some offence at their conduct. One of these was the king's secretary and butler, or cup-bearer. The other was head of his culinary department.

Joseph, as the general overseer of the prison, came in contact with these men, noted their sadness of face and tendered sympathy. What a noble example! Instead of moping about, bemoaning his lot, Joseph was cheerful, trusting in God and waiting for some circumstance by which God would eventually open up the way before him. Such a noble character can always find time to speak a word of consolation to those in trouble! What an example to worldly men of today! What an example to Christian men of today, who have much advantage over him in so many ways. . . .

When Joseph learned that the two official prisoners were troubled because of impressive dreams, he volunteered interpretations. The one was encouraging, and the other discouraging. He told the butler that within three days he would be back again in favor with the king, but informed the baker that within three days he would be executed. Then Joseph, mindful of the fact that he had a duty to perform in respect to attaining his own liberty, urged upon the butler—the one he had so encouraged and befriended—that when at liberty he would remember his comforter and do something to bring Joseph's case before proper authorities, that he might be heard and, if possible, be released.

But alas, for the hardness of heart so prevalent! The butler forgot all about Joseph, his prisoner friend, for two years! Then the matter was brought to his attention by Pharaoh's dream: for none of the wise men of Egypt were able to interpret it. With apologies for his neglect, the butler told the king of the dream experiences of the baker and himself in prison and of the wonderful young man Joseph, who by some god-given power had interpreted their dreams, just as these turned out.

During those two years, Joseph doubtless hoped much and waited longingly for some adjustment of his case. We doubt not that, instead of growing faint in respect to his faith in God, he all the more earnestly laid hold upon the Lord, and realized that his experiences must be for good. And so they were; for it was when Joseph was just thirty years of age—when he had just reached manhood under the old-time law—that Pharaoh sent for him to interpret his dreams, and rewarded him very highly.

Pharaoh's Dreams Interpreted

Pharaoh related his two dreams. In the first he saw seven fine, strong cattle, and a little later the same number of very poor, lean cattle—the worst he had ever seen. In the dream, the lean cattle ate up the fat ones, and looked none the better. In the second dream, the king saw a fine stalk of corn grow up out of the earth, bearing seven full, healthy ears of corn; and then he saw another stalk with seven withered ears, good for nothing. The latter swallowed up the former, and looked none the better.

Young Joseph quickly gave the explanation of the dreams; but before doing so, he very distinctly told the king that the interpretation came not from himself, but from God. Thus he exemplified the Scriptural teaching, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him," and "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."—Prov. 3:6; Psalm 37:4.

Joseph explained that the two dreams referred to the same matter—that unitedly they taught that there would be seven years of great plenty in the land of Egypt; and that these would be followed by seven years of famine, which would fully consume all the surplus of the plentiful years. Proceeding, Joseph offered the suggestion that God evidently meant this information to be used by Pharaoh, and recommended that, forthwith, a special agent of the king should be appointed to buy up all the surplus grain in the seven years of plenty and to store it for use during the seven years of famine.

Pharaoh very wisely acceded, and with manifestation of great breadth of mind and desire to serve the interests of his people, promptly appointed Joseph himself to be the purchaser of the surplus corn of the years of plenty, to have full charge of the matter and to attend to its disbursement in the following years of famine.

Thus Joseph stepped out of prison into a fourteen years' contract. From suffering because of slander he suddenly stepped into a place of highest authority, next to Pharaoh, in the greatest empire of those days. Can we doubt that God's hand was in the matter of Joseph's success and exaltation? Surely not! Nor should we infer any lack of Divine favor in Joseph's experiences of adversity. On the contrary, we may feel sure that the lessons of his adversity were merely preparations for his subsequent experiences as Pharaoh's logos, or mouthpiece, throughout the kingdom.

We are reminded again of the last lesson that Joseph's experiences were typical of those of Jesus and the Church, His followers. The Bible assures us that the graces of humility and patience are both closely related to love and loyalty. St. Paul reminds us of this when he declares, "If ye be without chastisement, . . . then are ye . . . not sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" He reminds us that "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."—Hebrews 12:6-8.

It was so with Jesus, and with all the faithful Apostles, and has been so with all the followers of Jesus during this Gospel Age. It will undoubtedly continue to be true in the case of all the consecrated Church. It is because the Lord Jesus loves these noble characters that He counts them worthy of trials and testings, disciplines, etc. These are necessary to qualify them for the positions of honor, glory, immortality and great responsibility, to which the Father has called Jesus and His brethren, the Church.

The Value of Adversity

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Jacob's special love for his son Joseph manifested itself in favoritism—the princely coat, or robe, etc. Quite possibly he would have spoiled his son, had not Divine Providence interfered and taken him entirely out of his father's control. Many fathers, especially the rich, have made similar mistakes. Hence the sons of the rich are not always a credit to their fathers.

The great Heavenly Father, however, makes no such mistakes. His people are assured that trials and difficulties are marks rather of their relationship to God and of His loving care over them. True, this providential care is restricted: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." His special dealings are with His consecrated people—those who have entered into a covenant with Him, who have become His servants and His children. To these alone belongs the promise that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."—Romans 8:28.

While this special call applies peculiarly to the Church of this Gospel Age, there is a sense in which it was applicable to the Hebrews, since the time of Abraham. Joseph belonged to this line which was in covenant relationship with God. This accounts for God's dealing with him rather than with young men of other families than Abraham's. Incidentally, it is worthy of notice that the Israelites passed through many trying experiences because of being God's people. Many of those experiences they might have escaped, had they not come into covenant relationship with God. But had they escaped the trials and difficulties, they would have escaped certain privileges and blessings also. And the blessings which God gives always outweigh the adversities which prepare for them.

Jewish and Christian Elections

This reminds us that the Bible declares that the Jewish people, and subsequently the Christians, are God's Elect — God's chosen People — the Seed of Abraham, natural and Spiritual. Both have offers of God's blessings not accorded to other peoples, and in both cases the trying experiences are to fit the elect ones for the future glories to which they have been invited.

Nevertheless, God has also a great blessing in store for the non-elect. During the thousand years of Messiah's reign, the elect Church, the saintly, only, will be Messiah's joint-heirs in the great Kingdom of God, which will then take control of the earth. Then also the Elect from the Hebrews will be used, in another part of the work, in conjunction with the Christian Church, the one on the Heavenly plane, the other on the earthly. Through these two Israels, God's blessings are to be poured out on all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues.

Although God has not specially supervised the affairs of any except these two elect classes, nevertheless we see that He has permitted, in a general way, great lessons of adversity to come to the whole human family. As the special trials and difficulties of the elect classes are intended to work for them special blessing and qualifications for their work as God's agencies, so the general tribulations of the world will give general lessons that will be helpful to all people by giving all experiences with sin and death—by teaching all thus the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

By and by, when Messiah's Kingdom shall be established, when the reign of righteousness shall begin, when the curse shall be lifted, when the blessing shall flow instead—then the lessons of sorrow and tears and crying and dying will all prove valuable. Humanity will appreciate the great blessings of God in the future very largely by contrast with the evils and sorrows of the present time. When, by and by, they shall learn fully and conclusively that all these sorrows and tears are the results of violation of God's laws and disregard of His injunctions, the lesson undoubtedly will be one that will never be forgotten.

Wherever the plowshare of trouble has gone, it has served to break up the fallow ground and to make ready for the seed of Divine Truth and grace. The next Age, under Messiah's beneficent rule, will be the time of sowing the seeds of knowledge of God and appreciation of His glorious character and Plan. The results will undoubtedly be glorious, as the Scriptures declare. Eventually all will participate in these blessings everlastingly, except such as intelligently refuse them, choosing sin rather than righteousness, in that Day when the knowledge of the Truth will be given to all and when assistance to righteousness will be apparent. —Z. '13:109-111.

Mercy is Better than Sacrifice

Genesis 45:1-46:7.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"—Psalm 133:1.

WHEN Joseph beheld how changed were his brethren, he sympathized with them. When he saw that their hearts went back to their wrong course in his own case, and that they realized the Divine disapproval and were sorry, he pitied them. When he saw their interest in his aged father and their unwillingness to hasten his death by an unkind act or word he was full of pity. He wished, however, that the disclosure of his identity should not be witnessed by the Egyptians. Realizing that his emotions were getting the better of him, he hastily cried out, ordering all the Egyptians to leave the room. Then he made himself known, saying, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."

We can well imagine the consternation of the brethren. It had appeared to them that their trials and difficulties were multiplied, and that somehow or other Joseph had been identified with all their troubles. Now, to be in his presence, to hear him speak to them, no longer through an interpreter, but directly in their own language, telling them that he was Joseph, we can imagine how they felt—stunned.

But Joseph, full of true sympathy and pity, hastened to set them at their ease. He did not cruelly threaten them, nor cause them to suffer punishment for their wrongdoing. He did not even chide them for the wrong. Instead, realizing that sin had already brought them a punishment, Joseph consoled them, saying, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve life . . . to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

How beautiful the revenge! Joseph heaped upon his brethren unasked forgiveness and expressions of sympathy. Alas, how few Christians under similar circumstances would have been so noble! And yet Christians have much advantage every way over Joseph, in that they have been begotten of the Holy Spirit and have the instructions of the Scriptures. How beautifully Joseph represented in type Christ and His Spirit. How evidently the creeds of the Dark Ages misled us when they taught us to believe that all the Jews, the brethren of Christ, were to be eternally tormented because they had crucified Jesus instead of accepting Him and becoming His disciples!

Now in the better light shining from one page to another of the Bible, God's people are seeing that instead of Messiah's purposing the eternal torture of the Jews, He purposes the contrary—that they shall obtain Divine mercy and forgiveness. This mercy will be extended to them very shortly, after Messiah's Kingdom shall have been established, as St. Paul points out in Romans 11:25-33: "They shall obtain mercy through your mercy." The same thought is expressed by the Prophet, saying of Israel, "They shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for Him." (Zechariah 12:10.) Theirs will be a mourning of true sorrow, as they shall realize the grievous wrong committed more than eighteen centuries ago. But instead of their being punished with an eternity of torture, the Lord will be gracious to them, as He declares, "And I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication." How beautiful, and how much in harmony with our typical lesson of today! Joseph's ten brethren apparently typified Israel, as the Egyptians typified the Gentiles, as Benjamin typified the Great Company, and as Joseph himself typified the Messianic class, the Elect, of whom Jesus is the Head, and the overcoming Church, the members of His Body. . . .

Joseph Was Long Misunderstood

Joseph's brethren failed to understand him—so great was the difference between their characters and his. Even after they had become more sympathetic and tenderhearted, they had still a sufficiency of bitterness of spirit and of animosity that, if they had been in Joseph's place, they would have seen to it that somehow or other future punishments would have been meted out. They were, therefore, surprised by Joseph's words of brotherly kindness and sympathy, and unable to believe that he meant it all. They concluded that he was dealing graciously with them for his father Jacob's sake.

So we find that years afterwards, when Jacob died, these ten brethren were in great trepidation lest Joseph should then wreak his vengeance upon them. They went to him again, asking for a continuance of his forgiveness. But Joseph said unto them, "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."—Genesis 50:19-21.

Joseph Was Taught of God

However he learned the lesson, it is most manifest that Joseph was taught of God. Vengeance against his brethren he had none. Whatever punishment would come to them for their sin would be not his to inflict, but God's. And that punishment they evidently did receive in the mental torture, fears and forebodings of many years. Joseph had nothing to do with regulating the Divine arrangements whereby Justice always metes out punishment for every wrong. It was his to be generous, loving, kind, an exemplification of the great Redeemer and His Messianic Kingdom.

It was the same in respect to his own experiences. We note with astonishment that a man with so few opportunities had such a comprehensive grasp of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Christ. We who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and who have the example of the words of Jesus and the Apostles and the history of all past ages, may still sit at Joseph's feet, and be amazed to perceive how thoroughly he learned of God, and may apply similar lessons to ourselves. Never a murmur, never a word of repining, against the bitter lot that had been his! In every word, in everything, he testifies to God's Goodness, Wisdom, Love and Power. He realized that to have made a single change or alteration in the experiences that had come to him would have been to do injury to the Plan as a whole, and he would have failed to learn some of the lessons of life which he needed.

Oh how much all the followers of Jesus need to look unto the Lord in respect to all their trying experiences! How much we all need to have and to exercise faith in God—that He knows, He sees and He is able and willing to make all things work together for good to us, because we love Him, because we have been called according to His Purpose. . . .

Jacob in Egypt

Joseph planned that for the five remaining years of the famine, at least, his father Jacob and indeed the entire family should come into Egypt. He thought of the district styled Goshen as very suitable for their purposes, being a cattle-grazing locality. Pharaoh, heartily in accord with Joseph, his prime minister, and pleased with the prosperity of affairs under his management, gave full consent and suggested that Egyptian wagons be sent to fetch the old man Jacob and the women and children, not so able to ride upon the asses, camels, etc. Joseph prepared delicacies for the journey and little presents, indicative of his love. He sent a special message to his father, "Tell my father of my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen, and ye shall haste to bring down my father hither." Then he kissed them all goodbye, saying:

"Fall Not Out By the Way"

Evidently Joseph was a keen observer of human nature. Many would have thought it unnecessary to caution the brethren against disputes under all the circumstances. Many would have said, "They will be so overjoyed with the blessings of God in the outcome of their experiences that love will prevail amongst them, and no disputes." The contrary, however, is often true. When prosperity comes, there are opportunities to quarrel over the spoils, to feel more or less of envy and selfishness.

Under former conditions, the brethren would have felt jealous of Benjamin, because of the greater attention which he received from Joseph and because of the present of three hundred pieces of silver given to him. They might have queried as to how much liberty they would have in the land of Goshen. The suggestion might have come to some that they would then be under the thumb of Joseph, and that he would favor Benjamin, etc. Evidently Joseph's warning, "Fall not out by the way," was timely.

We have known matters to go similarly with the Lord's brethren. When in tribulation, their hearts were crying to the Lord, but in prosperity they were disposed to grudge one against another, and to be envious and jealous of each other's opportunities, blessings and privileges. What a great mistake! Each should remember that the Master's eye is noting his progress in Christlikeness. Each should remember that brotherly love is one of the tests of character.

It is all the more true because sometimes brethren in Christ can make more trouble for us than any others. The very closeness of our relationship, the very knowledge of each other, give to each of us opportunities for criticism and evil surmisings that might not arise as respects others. Well it is that all of God's people should accept Joseph's words, "See that ye fall not out one with another by the way." It is the way planned for us by the Lord. It is a narrow and difficult way, full of adversities to the flesh, and trials and tests to the spirit. Proportionately, there should be love and sympathy, co-operation and helpfulness. The words of the Psalmist used as our Golden Text in this lesson, were evidently prophetically written as respects the Church, the Lord's brethren: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

The Psalmist proceeds to compare this unity of the brethren, the Church, with the precious ointment poured upon the head of the king and of the high priest on their induction into office. The significance of the illustration evidently is that the anointing oil typified the Holy Spirit, and that as it ran down the high priest's beard, and even to the skirts of his garment; it anointed the entire body of the priest. That priest typifies Melchizedek, the Royal Priest—Jesus the Head, and the Church His Body. Throughout this Gospel Age the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which came to the Church, the Body of Christ, at Pentecost, has continued, and gives an unction, or anointing to all of His true members, and by this anointing these members may be recognized as one with Christ. "For by one Spirit ye were all anointed into one Body."—1 Corinthians 12:13; Z. 13:140-142.

"The Lord Knoweth Them That Are His"

2 Timothy 2:19.

THE Golden Text which we have chosen as the caption gives the key-thought of this lesson, namely, that the Bible, while incidentally dealing with many things that appertain to the earth and its people, mainly has reference to those who manifest a reverence for the Lord and to whom he correspondingly manifests his favor in various ways in various ages, co-operating with them for their present joy and their everlasting welfare.

The Scriptures everywhere represent the Almighty Creator as benevolent, generous, kind toward his creatures, desiring their welfare, and, where punishment is necessary, inflicting it merely with a view to their recovery out of wrong conditions or to make examples for others who may thus be deterred from wrong doing. True, the Scriptures do also present Satan and the forces of evil, but always picture them to us as adversaries of the Almighty and of all who are good and in harmony with righteousness. Thus the Bible is in many respects a history of the conflict between good and evil, and it faithfully shows us, as an artificial record would not, that the general tendency of our race is sinward—that the smaller proportion escape the delusions of the Adversary, develop a reverential love for the Creator, and manifest loyalty and obedience. However, the Scriptures are very explicit in their assurances that it shall not always be thus: that the time for the triumph of right over wrong, of God over Satan, is arranged for, its time fixed, and its accomplishment certain. Everywhere also they point us to the fact that the reign of righteousness could never be accomplished without divine assistance—that our race is so impaired and weak through the fall that perfection is a matter of impossibility on our part, and hence that our help cometh from the Lord.

It was this promise of a coming blessing that worked so marvellously in the hearts of the patriarchs, fixed their minds upon the Lord and separated them from the ways of evil. And it is the same gracious promise which, in proportion to our faith in it, helps us of today as it helped the patriarchs of old. "According to thy faith be it unto you," is still God's rule, and those who have much faith and loyalty of heart to the Lord are sure to be blessed of him, for "the Lord knoweth them that are his." Moreover, it is the high reward which God has promised to these his faithful ones that constitutes a large proportion of the incentive which strengthens us in our battle with the world, the flesh and the Adversary. It was so with the patriarchs and so it is with us of the Gospel age.

"As the Heavens Are Higher than the Earth"

It is when we get the grand sweep of the divine plan that we can see God's ultimate purpose of vanquishing sin and blessing all the families of the earth with the knowledge of his goodness and with a favorable opportunity for reformation—when we come to see that the election of the Jewish age and also of this Gospel age are but means to that grand end of blessing the world. Then we begin to discern how high are God's ways above man's ways and God's plans above man's schemes, and to discern the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of God's love and provision for the blessing of the world. And proportionately as we look upon this glorious picture we are strengthened by his might in the inner man, and lifted out of our narrowness and selfishness, and more and more constituted images of God's dear Son, and thus also images of the heavenly Father. O, then, that we might each and all be of those who are known of the Lord as the "very elect"—of those whom he will use in the present time in connection with his present work of helping the little flock, and will be used by and by in his great work of blessing all the families of the earth. What trials and difficulties we might well endure with such a prospect!

If from five to twenty years are counted a reasonable portion for the education of children for the duties of a life of half a century, how much education would be reasonably appropriate for an eternal life? Nay, more, how much of an education would be necessary for the kings and priests who will be the teachers and judges of the world of mankind to develop them for eternal life? We are lost in amazement of thought, and wonder how any can be developed in the brief space at our disposal. How valuable, then, is every moment, every day, as it sweeps past, for the learning of the lessons so necessary to our present joy and our everlasting usefulness in the Master's service.—Z. '07: 92, 93.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

As we seek the Lord with all our hearts as "dear children," and with willing minds, he makes known to us his great plans and purposes respecting the future. He makes known to us his purpose to have a **temple,** and preparations already made therefor, and how and when it will be built and its object: the blessing of all the families of the earth. At each step of the way, as we the more fully enter into sympathy with God's great plan of the ages, it serves to develop us the more and to prepare us for the share in that Temple and Kingdom.—Z. '08: 358.

◆

No right-minded person will conclude that because God is very merciful and of tender compassion, therefore He may be sinned against repeatedly and forgiveness be relied upon. Rather let us get the thought that even though we should be forgiven and even though God should be merciful to the very last extreme, nevertheless every transgression and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward. Whoever sins will suffer, even though he subsequently repent and be forgiven. The degradation effected by the transgressions of Divine Law persists.

This principle applies to us who now have Divine forgiveness in this present time. Many of the Lord's people today are suffering mentally and physically for sins that are past and that are covered by God's mercy. The same principle will apply during the incoming Age, when God will deal with the world of mankind through the glorified Christ. Sins that are past will be forgiven them; but the degradation of character resulting from those sins will survive the forgiveness of sin; and those who have sinned deeply during the present life will have proportionately the more to get rid of, more to be restored from. They will be obliged to climb from the greater depths in order to reach the glorious heights of life and of human perfection in the image and likeness of God.—Z. '17: 216.

◆

"In pastures green? Not always; sometimes He
Who knoweth best in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways, where heavy shadows be.
Out of the sunshine, warm and soft and bright,
Out of the sunshine into darkest night;
I oft would faint with terror and with fright.
Only for this—I know He holds my hand;
So, whether in the green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand.

"And by still waters? No, not always so;
Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.
But when the storm beats loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, 'Lo, it is I!'
Above the tempest wild I hear Him say,
'Beyond this darkness lies the perfect day;
In every path of thine I lead the way.'"
—Z. '13: 171.

◆

No part of yesterday was as glorious as this hour.—Z. '13: 3.

◆

God is very great. We are very small. It is a wonderful thing to be informed that God loves us. —Z. '13: 213.

The very fact that the Lord has granted us the privilege of his fellowship is an assurance that there was something in us that he did not despise, and was willing to take over, that he might mould and fashion it by his truth and grace.—Z. '08:13, 14.

◇

All of us should reverence the Lord and recognize his supervision in the affairs of his consecrated people: specially should they be on the lookout for divine providences and be prompt to follow them. A constant temptation is to view matters from the worldly standpoint and to forget divine providence in our affairs. Every day this lesson should become more deeply impressed upon us. With each year of Christian experience we should learn to look into the facts and circumstances of life from the standpoint of faith, seeking to note the will of the Lord concerning us in things small as well as great.—Z. '08:198.

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A. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 106

> *"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."* Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"Love Is the Principal Thing"

1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

IN the preceding chapter the Apostle has recounted the various "gifts" of the holy spirit conferred upon the early Church for its establishment and development. He closes the chapter with the exhortation that while esteeming all of these gifts, each member of the Church should covet earnestly the superior ones; and then he adds, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way"—something still better than any of those gifts of the holy spirit. Our lesson pertains to this more excellent ambition which should actuate every child of God; viz., the acquisition and development of the spirit of love, the spirit of the Lord. In proportion as we have the mind of Christ, in proportion as the holy spirit dwells in us and abounds, in that same proportion our love abounds.

There are different kinds of love, however, and the Apostle is here not speaking of general love, but of one particular kind, which belongs to God, and to the New Creation begotten of him. There is an animal love, such as the brute creation exercises toward its young, a love which frequently leads to the sacrifice of life in its devotion. This same kind of love inheres in the natural man, even in his fallen condition. It is all more or less selfish love—ready, perhaps, at times to rob others that it might lavish good things upon those it favors. This is not the love which the Apostle describes, nor is he addressing his language to the natural man. He addresses the New Creation, informing them that the natural man will not be able to receive, to appreciate, to comply with, that which he presents. In order to a clear comprehension of this love, and a hearty acceptance of it as the rule of life, it is apparently necessary that we be "begotten" from above.

It seems impossible to describe love itself; the best we can do is to describe its conduct. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it—it is of God, god-likeness in the heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts—supervising all the human attributes and seeking fully to control them.

Before describing the operation of love the Apostle impresses upon us its importance, assuring us that if we possess the very choicest of the "gifts" already explained, and do not have therewith love, we will still lack the evidence of our being New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We should be merely "sounding brass or cymbal"—making a noise, but having no acceptable feeling or virtue in ourselves in connection with our words. He assures us thus that ability to speak fluently on gospel themes, even, might not be a proof of our relationship to the Lord as New Creatures. The Apostle's declaration is introduced with an "if," which might be challenged, to a certain extent, by the assertion that no one could speak forth with power, with force, the gospel of God's dear Son unless he possessed the spirit of love. Although we have all met public speakers who could deliver very beautiful essays, we have generally perceived a hollowness in their teaching unless they spoke from the heart, prompted by love of the truth—not by love of applause, nor for love of money.

Amongst the gifts, prophecy or oratory was one which the Apostle commended. Knowledge of mysteries of God is also commended, and large faith is reckoned amongst the chief of the Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their fullest measure, and love were absent, he would be nothing—a mere cipher—not a member of the New Creation at all, since love is the very spirit of the begetting to the new nature. What a wonderful test this is! let us each apply it to himself. Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by my love for him, for his brethren, for his cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies, —rather than by my knowledge or fame or oratory. Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the holy spirit of love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. In the measurement of character, therefore, we are to put love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness and acceptance to the Lord.

The Apostle next takes another line of argument: his hearers already understood benevolence, alms-giving to the needy, to be commendable and to impress upon them the importance of having love as the controlling principle of their hearts, the Apostle declares that if he should give all of his goods to feed the poor—keeping nothing back—and yet do this without proper love as the mainspring to the conduct, it would profit him nothing. He goes still further and declares, that even if he should become a martyr, and be burned at the stake, it would not bring him the blessed reward sought, unless that martyrdom were prompted, impulsed, by love.

But it may be inquired, How could anyone practise such self-denial, such sacrifice, such faith, etc., and yet be without love? It is not our thought that they could practise these and be devoid of love; that there must be some measure of love. We understand the Apostle to make this strong statement of the case in order to show us that our almsgiving, our sacrifices, our knowledge, our teaching, are acceptable to the Lord and appreciated by him, only to the extent that they have love behind them. If love enters slightly into them, then they are slightly appreciated; if love enters largely into them, then God appreciates them largely. If they are prompted wholly by love, then God accepts them fully. If love be only a part of the motive power behind our conduct as New Creatures, it implies that other motives are active in us, tending to neutralize in the Lord's esteem even services and sacrifices performed in his name and upon worthy objects. Let us be on guard against these neutralizing influences, and earnestly seek to be whole-hearted, full of love:—that our every service of the Lord and of the brethren and of the truth be from a pure heart, free from personal ambition, pride, etc.

Having given us such a conception of the importance of love, the Apostle proceeds to describe what it is and what it is not—how it operates, and how it does not operate or conduct itself. Let us each make a practical application of this matter to himself, and inquire within: Have I such a love, especially for the household of faith, as leads me to suffer considerable and for a long time, and yet to be kind? How quickly do I get offended? If very quickly it surely indicates that I have very little of the spirit of the Lord,—love. If I am disposed to resent the trifling wrongs of life—if I have the spirit of resentment, am disposed to render evil for evil, and railing for railing,—it marks my deficiency in this greatest of all the graces, so essential to my ultimate passing, as an overcomer, the divine inspection.

Of our heavenly Father it is said that "he is kind to the unthankful." Have I this spirit of kindness—his spirit? Am I kind to my friends? gentle? courteous? Have I this mark of love pervading my actions and words and thoughts—that I think of and am considerate of others? that I feel and manifest kindness toward them in word, in look, in act? A Christian, above all others, should be kind, courteous, gentle, in his home, in his place of business, in the Church—everywhere. With the child of God this patience and kindness are not merely put on, as grapes might be tied to a thornbush, but, on the contrary, they are the **fruits** of the spirit—growths from or results of having come into fellowship with God, learned of him, received of his spirit of holiness, spirit of love.

7 Have I the love that envieth not, so that I can see others prosper and rejoice in their prosperity, even if for the time my own affairs be not so prosperous? This is generosity, the very opposite of jealousy and envy. The root of envy is selfishness: envy will not grow upon the root of love. Love envies not, but rejoices in the prosperity of all that is good.

Have I the love that vaunteth not itself?—the love that tends to humility, that is not boastful, not puffed up? Some one has truly said, that "love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence." Boasting—over self-esteem—has led many a man not only into folly, but sometimes into gross sins, in his endeavor to make good his boasts. The spirit of the Lord is a spirit of a sound mind, which not only seeks generously to esteem others, but also soberly to estimate oneself, and not to be puffed up.

Have I the love which does not behave itself unseemly—discourteously, impolitely? Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. The secret of politeness is either a surface polishing or love in the heart. As Christians we are to have the heart-love, which will prompt us to acts of kindness and courtesy, not only in the household of faith, but in our homes and in our dealings with the world.

Have I the love that seeketh not her own merely?—that might even be willing to let some of her own rights be sacrificed in the interests of others?—or have I the selfishness which not only demands my own rights on every occasion, but which demands those rights regardless of the convenience, comfort and rights of others? To have love in this particular means that we will be on guard against taking any unjust advantage of others, and to prefer rather to suffer a wrong than to do a wrong—to suffer an injustice than to do injustice.

Have I the love which is not easily provoked? Indeed, the original omits the word "easily," and gives rather the thought that love does not become irritated, roused to anger. Love enables its possessor to see both sides of a question: it makes of him a veritable philosopher: it gives him the spirit of a sound mind. He perceives that exasperation and violent anger are unbecoming and worse than that, injurious, not only toward those against whom they may be directed, but injurious in their effect also upon his own heart and body. There may be times when love will need to be firm, almost to sternness and inflexibility, where principles are involved, where valuable lessons are to be inculcated: and this might come under the head of anger, using that word in a proper sense in regard to a righteous indignation, exercised **for a loving purpose,** for doing good—but then only for a time. If justly angry we should see to it that we sin not, even with our lips or in our hearts, in which at no time may we entertain any but loving and generous sentiments toward those who are our enemies, or toward those of our friends whom we would assist or instruct or correct.

To be easily provoked is to have a bad temper, to get worked up into a passion, where evil looks and evil words and angry sentiments are involved. This is wholly contrary to the spirit of love, and whoever is on the Lord's side and seeking to be pleasing to him and to attain to an overcomer's position should jealously guard himself against this general besetment of our day. Those begotten of the holy spirit should all be good tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light than by the exhibition of the spirit of love in the daily affairs of life.

Have I the spirit of love which thinketh no evil?—which is guileless, not suspicious of evil or looking for faults in others, or attributing to them evil motives? It is an old adage that "faults are thick where love is thin."

The Revised Version presents a slightly different thought here—"Taketh not account of evil"—does not charge up the wrong against the evil-doer, as if waiting for an apology or a restitution or an opportunity to "get even." But while love passes over offenses and takes no account of them, holding no grudges, this would not mean that love would necessarily treat evil-doers in precisely the same manner that it would treat its friends. It might be proper or necessary, even, to take some notice of the offenses to the extent of not manifesting the same cordiality as before, but no hatred, malice or strife should be manifested—nothing but kindness and gentleness, leaving the door of opportunity open for a full reconciliation as soon as possible; doing all that could be done to promote a reconciliation and evincing a willingness to forgive and forget the wrong.

Have I the love which rejoices not in iniquity (inequity) but rejoices in the truth? Are the principles of right and wrong so firmly fixed in my mind, and am I so thoroughly in accord with the right and so opposed to the wrong that I would not encourage the wrong, but must condemn it, even if it brought advantage to me? Am I so in accord with right, with truth, that I could not avoid rejoicing in the truth and in its prosperity, even to the upsetting of some of my preconceived opinions, or to the disadvantage of some of my earthly interests? The love of God which the Apostle is here describing as the spirit of the Lord's people, is a love which is far above all selfishness, and is based upon fixed principles which should, day by day, be more and more distinctly discerned, and always firmly adhered to at any cost.

Have I the love that beareth all things?—that is impregnable against the assaults of evil? that resists evil, impurity, sin and everything contrary to love? Have I the love that believeth all things? that is unwilling to impute evil to another unless forced so to do, by indisputable evidences?—that would rather believe good than evil about everybody?—that would take no pleasure in hearing evil, but would be disposed to resent it? Have I the love that hopeth all things, that perseveres under unfavorable conditions, and continues to hope for and to labor for those who need my assistance? Have I the love that endureth all things?—that is, that continues to hope for the best in regard to all and to strive for the best, and that with perseverance—not easily discouraged?

As disciples or pupils of Christ, we are in his school, and the great lesson which he is teaching us day by day, and the lesson which we must learn thoroughly in all its various features and ramifications, is the lesson of Love. It takes hold upon and relates to all the words and thoughts and doings of our daily lives. As the poet has said,

"As every lovely hue is light—so every grace is love."

Next the Apostle points out that as love is the most excellent thing, so is it the most enduring. The gift of prophecy would pass away; the value and necessity for speaking with other tongues would cease; and all knowledge of the present time, imperfect as it is, must surely cease to be valuable when the perfections of the new dispensation are fully ushered in. The very best informed now know only in part; but when perfection shall be attained in the Kingdom, and under its ministration, all the partial and imperfect conditions of the present time will have been superseded, and only the one thing may surely be said to endure and be everlasting—and that one thing is Love.

An illustration of the growth which we must expect as between the present knowledge and attainments and those of the future, is of the child and the growth to manhood. Another illustration is seeing obscurely in one of the old-time mirrors, which gave but imperfect reflections. With the perfections of the new condition we will see perfectly, know perfectly, understand perfectly. Just so the gifts which were in the early Church were very suitable to it, as fitted to its infantile condition; but as it would develop to maturity the value of those "gifts" would diminish, and they would be no more; but higher developments of divine favor were to be expected, faith, hope and love. All three of these the Church of God is to cultivate, and to esteem as fruits of the spirit, far above the gifts of the spirit,—and the greatest of these three is Love.

Love also is the most enduring; for will not faith practically come to an end when we shall see and know thoroughly? And will not hope practically be at an end when we shall reach the fruition of all our hopes and be possessors of the fulness of our heavenly Father's promises? Love, however, will never fail, even as it had no beginning. God is love, and since he was without beginning, so love was without beginning; because it is his character, his disposition; and as he endureth forever, so love will endure forever. Whoever, therefore, learns thoroughly the lessons of this present time in the school of Christ, and thus becomes well stocked with this wonderful grace of love, lays up treasures which may be his to all eternity—a great blessing to himself and to all with whom he comes in contact now; and a blessing to the world to which he will be permitted to minister during the Millennium—a blessing everlasting, because it is a seal of divine approval.—Z. '03: 55-58.

Abiding in Divine Love, Conditional

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."—John 15:10.

SINCE all mankind are alienated from their Creator through sin and its condemnation, the application of the text by any individual implies that previously he has come to a knowledge of God's grace in Christ, and has accepted his share of the same through faith and has thus had access to the love of God, as one of the sons of God. . . . This is an important matter overlooked by very many who think to keep themselves in divine love and under divine protecting care without first complying with the conditions of admission to membership in the Lord's family. There is but one doorway of entrance "into this grace wherein we stand and [as sons of God] rejoice in the hope of the coming glory," and that is the doorway of faith in and acceptance of the atonement, accomplished for us by our Redeemer at the cost of his own sacrifice at Calvary. Anyone attempting to climb into the family of God otherwise "the same is a thief and a robber"—a rejector of the only way and name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.—Rom. 5:1, 2; Acts 4:12.

But our text, like all of the holy Scriptures, is addressed to the Lord's people, who once were "children of wrath even as others," but have come into divine favor through the appointed way; and it calls our attention to something that is necessary to us beyond, after our full conversion or consecration to the Lord. It implies that getting into God's love is by no means the end of the Christian way, but merely the beginning of it; after we are in the way the Lord gives us commandments as his sons, and expects us to manifest the spirit of loyal sonship by obedience;—full obedience so far as the heart or intention is concerned, and as complete obedience as possible so far as the control of the flesh is concerned. Whoever neglects either to learn or to obey the commandments of the Lord, thereby manifests a lack of the true spirit of sonship, and thus condemns himself as unworthy to be longer reckoned or treated as a son of God. Thus seen the commandments of the Lord to those who have consecrated themselves and enter his family, are tests, proving them either worthy or unworthy of the divine favors and promises assured to the faithful overcomers. . . .

We can readily see that divine law is necessary, in heaven and in earth, in order that God's will may be done—that righteousness, truth and love shall prevail; and it is manifest that whoever is not sufficiently in sympathy with the principles of righteousness expressed in the Lord's commandments, so as to will and to strive to obey them, would not be a fit person to be used of the Lord in enforcing the divine laws during the Millennial age, and assisting mankind in discerning their righteousness and the blessing which will follow their observance.

What Are These Commandments?

Properly, we inquire, What are these commandments, the keeping of which is attended with such momentous results, and the neglect of which would mean the loss of our Redeemer's love and favor,—and hence, the loss of all the blessings specially prepared for those who love him? We answer, that our Lord's statement of these commandments briefly comprehends them all in one word, Love. Dividing the matter, we find that it has two parts—love for God and love for our fellows. Without this quality or characteristic of Love, being so developed in us as to be the controlling influence of our minds, we cannot hope to abide in the Lord's favor. True, he does not expect to gather ripe grapes from the new vine-shoot when first it makes its appearance; rather, the great Husbandman (1 Cor. 3:9) waits for the gradual development of the fruit, if after the shoot has come forth he sees upon it the bud of promise, which quickly develops, manifesting itself as the flower of the grapes. Nevertheless, manifestations of a coming fruitage of love are expected of the Lord, quickly after our union with him; and any smallness of development of this fruitage would indicate a corresponding lack of love and appreciation on our part, and would mean correspondingly small love for the truth and its principles; hence, the Lord's love for us would be correspondingly less than if more rapid progress were made.

Love would, necessarily mean the according of justice; because the law or requirements of the Lord are based upon justice, "the foundation of his throne." We are to view the commandments of the Lord from this standpoint, therefore, and to see first that our love for God is just,—must recognize that we owe him love, devotion, appreciation, because of what he has done and promises yet to do for us. Justice calls for our loving, reverential obedience to the Lord. It is the same with respect to our love for our fellowmen. Justice, as well as respect for our Heavenly Father's regulations, calls on us to do right to our neighbor,—to do toward him as we would have him do toward us. This is not more than absolute justice, and yet it is the very essence and spirit of the divine law of love. But while justice is the first feature of the commandment of love, it is not the end of its requirements: it requires that going beyond strict justice, our love shall prompt us to the exercise of mercy and forgiveness. And in thus exercising mercy, we are again but copying divine love; for our Heavenly Father not only deals with all his creatures according to justice but going beyond the lines of justice, in great compassion and mercy he provided in Christ Jesus a Redeemer for sinners. True, he did not provide this in violation of his justice; yet so far as we are concerned it is just the same as though, out of love and compassion, he had overridden justice in our assistance. Hence in our dealings with others, who like ourselves, are fallen and imperfect, we are to remember this feature and not only be just toward them but additionally to be merciful, generous, kind, even to the unthankful, —that thus we may be children of our Father in heaven.

The Lord through the Prophet expresses this thought of how the law of love is divisable and covers all the requirements of Christian character; he says, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). That these are very reasonable requirements will be conceded by all; that God could not require less from those whom he is educating for the future judging of the world, is evident: and, yet, all three of these qualities specified through the Prophet, are comprehended in the one word love. Love requires that we shall deal justly with our neighbors, with the brethren, with our families, with ourselves; that we shall seek to cultivate our appreciation of the rights of others —their physical rights, their moral and intellectual rights, their liberties; and that, appreciating these, we shall in no sense of the word; seek to abridge or deny them.

To "love mercy" is to go even beyond loving justice, and signifies a delight in yielding personal rights and privileges in the interest of others, where no principles are involved. It implies readiness to forgive the faults of others—a disinclination to be too exacting in respect to others, as well as a desire to be very exacting in respect to our treatment of others. The humble walk with God is included, also, in the commandment of love: because, who ever loves his Creator and appreciates his provisions for his creatures, in natural and in spiritual things, will love and appreciate God in return. And having such a proper conception of the greatness of the Almighty and of his own littleness and insufficiency, except by divine grace, he will be disposed indeed, to walk humbly with the Lord—not seeking paths of his own, but, trustingly, seeking to walk in the path which the Lord has marked out—in the footsteps of Jesus.

The same Apostle John who recorded our Lord's words of our text, commented further upon this subject of the love of God and of Christ, saying, "This is the love of God [i.e., proves or demonstrates our love of God], that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3.) This gives us the suggestion that the Lord not only expects us to keep his commandments of love to him and to the brethren, but that he expects also that in keeping these we should become so filled with an appreciation of the commandments and the principles that underlie them, that we would delight therein; not merely because they are God's commandments, but, additionally, because they are right, good, proper. This thought the Apostle expresses in the words, "And his commandments are not grievous." It is one thing to keep the divine commands or to seek to do so, all the while feeling more or less of restraint, lack of liberty, compulsion, duty, etc.; it is another thing to obey joyfully.

It is not improper to expect something of this spirit at the beginning of our experience as the Lord's people, seeking to keep his commandments; but we should expect, also, that as we grow in grace and grow in knowledge and grow in love, all these feelings of constraint, duty, etc., would disappear; so that, instead, we should delight to do the Lord's will, delight to keep his commandments of love, delight to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God—and that there should be a total absence of the feeling that the Lord's commandments are grievous, burdensome, irksome. This is the higher Christian development, and can only be found where the individual has become truly "a copy of God's dear Son," where the Father's spirit has developed and brought forth the ripe fruits of the spirit in abundant measure—meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love.

Recurring to our text, we note that our Lord's words also imply the same thing;—the necessity for obedience to the commandments of love, and to such a growth ultimately as would separate them from any feeling of bondage or grievousness. Our Lord's words, showing this, are in the latter part of the text—"**even as** I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."

7

As we look back at the beautiful character of our Lord Jesus and see his love for righteousness, for truth, and his willingness to be obedient to his Father's arrangements—even unto death—we can perceive readily that our dear Master had a love for the principles which lie back of the Father's commandments. He obeyed the Father, not through restraint, not through fear, but from a perfect love. Recognizing the Father's commandments, but not as being grievous, using the language put by the Prophet into his mouth, his sentiment was, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy law is in my heart." (Psalm 40:8.) We are to understand the Lord, therefore, to mean, that in order to abide in his love we must reach such a heart condition as this which he had;—a love for the Father's ways, for the principles of righteousness and truth. We may abide in his love at first under other conditions, feeling through our love the restraints of his commandment of love, but as we grow in knowledge, we must grow in grace, and outgrow those sentiments, and grow up into the Lord's spirit and sentiment in this matter; so that obedience to the Lord will be the delight of our hearts, and any failure to do his will would cause a pain, a shadow, an earth-born cloud, to hide us from the Father's smile.

Seeing the depths of our Lord's requirements, many will be inclined to say, Ah, yes, it is true that we must attain to such character-likeness of our Lord, but that transformation and renewing of the mind is not our part of the work but the Lord's: He must do this for us, else it will never be done. Partly right and partly wrong, we answer. It is true that when we consider ourselves, how weak and imperfect we are according to the old nature, according to the flesh, we have good cause for despairing and deciding that we never could accomplish such a great transformation from selfishness to love, in our own strength. It is true, also, that the Lord proposes to work in us—"both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13.) But it is just as true that we have a burden of responsibility in respect to this matter of overcoming. It is the Lord's part to provide the way, the truth, the life,—the means by which we may attain unto the condition to which he has called us; but it is our part to use the means. . . .

The Lord has provided for our justification, our reconciliation to himself, our acceptance to sonship, our anointing with the holy spirit, our instructions with the word of his grace, the word of promise: He works in us, to will and to do, through these exceeding great and precious promises and the glorious prospects and rewards that attach to them; but the amount that he will work in us and the results that will be worked out through these promises, depend upon us. As it depended upon us whether or not we would come into the grace which he has provided for us, and as we could have kept ourselves out of the love of God by refusing or neglecting the offer of his mercy and love, so we could neglect the word of his promise, neglect the various means of grace which he provides for our strengthening, establishing and upbuilding in the knowledge and grace of the truth. And thus neglecting his provisions we would proportionately fail to abide in his love—fail to obtain the promised favors. The Apostle intimates this, saying:

"Keep yourselves in the Love of God."—Jude 21.

What, then is the essence of what we have foregoing found to be the divine instruction upon this subject? It is this. (1) Our hearts from the very beginning are to appreciate the imperfections of our own flesh and to look away to the Lord for the needed assistance to abide in his love.

(2) The exceeding great and precious promises must be studied, earnestly, that we may thus have them constitute in us "the power of God" for good —keeping us in the knowledge of the Lord and, through obedience, in his love.

(3) This knowledge will profit us only as we put it in practice and seek to regulate our minds, our thoughts, our words, and so far as possible all our actions of life, according to this standard which God through his Word, established before us as an ideal. We are to remember that if we had all knowledge yet had not love, it would profit us nothing, but we are to remember, also, that in the divine arrangement it seems to be impossible that our knowledge should progress much in advance of our obedience to what we already know.

(4) We are to appreciate every evidence which we find, in ourselves or others, of such growth in obedience to the law of God—the law of love with its connections of justice and mercy and reverence.

(5) We are not to expect the full results of joy in doing the Father's will in the beginning of our experiences, nor are we to feel discouraged if in the beginning the motive be, to a considerable extent, duty-love instead of a love for principles. We are to seek at the Lord's hand further blessing and further filling of his spirit of love. We are to seek to study and to appreciate the basic principles upon which the Lord governs the universe, and are to seek to bring our hearts into sympathetic accord with that law and principle and spirit of righteousness. We are to remember that much of our lack of appreciation of the principles of righteousness is due to our ignorance; and we are to expect that as we come to know the Lord and to understand his plan better, the eyes of our understanding will open the wider so that it will be possible for us not only "to comprehend with all saints," but to appreciate with all saints, the principles underlying and constituting the divine law of love.

Thus we may daily and hourly keep ourselves in the Lord's love by obedience to, and a growing love for, the principles of righteousness. And we are to rejoice in every experience in life—its trials, difficulties, sorrows, disappointments, etc., no less than in its pleasures, if by any or all of these means the Lord shall instruct us and give us clearer insight into our own deficiencies, and a still clearer insight into that perfect law of liberty and love which he has established, and to which he requires our full and loyal heart-submission.—Z. '02:171-173.

The Tabernacle of Meeting

Exodus 40:1-13, 34-38.

Golden Text:—"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle."

OUR Berean Studies of the Tabernacle have familiarized us with the main features of this lesson. In the **Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices** we learned of the form, size, construction, etc., of the Tabernacle which God directed the Israelites through Moses their mediator to erect for his worship. It was portable, and every way suited to the forty-years journey in the wilderness which the Lord foreknew would be their portion as a people. Whenever they encamped the Tabernacle was erected as the center of the camp and the tents of the Israelites were grouped about it; first the tribe of Levi, immediately surrounding it, divided into its various families; outside of the Levites were the tribes of Israel—on the north three tribes, on the south three tribes, on the east three tribes, on the west three tribes. Joseph's tribe being divided into two, Ephraim and Manasseh, made the twelve complete without the Levites.

The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night continued to be the representation of the Lord with his chosen people, and this cloud and fire-pillar seem to have been associated with the Tabernacle in the sense that a branch or foot came down from the cloud to the Tabernacle. When it left it indicated that the time had come for them to travel. They followed the leading of the cloud: when it stayed they rested, constructed their camp, and a connection established itself as before between the cloud and the Tabernacle. Thus Israel had continually before them a manifestation of God and his protecting care over them as his people. They had craved an idol to go before them and to serve as an outward manifestation of God; they had been punished for the idolatry implied in the making of the golden calf; they had learned the lesson and repented, and God had given them what he had already planned—something far superior in the way of an evidence of his presence in their midst and his guidance of their affairs.

God First—The Center

From the arrangement of the Tabernacle and its relationship to the camp of Israel we can see that the lesson to that people must have been God first — religion the center of all ambition and activity. All the tribes were related to the Tabernacle because it represented God, and they were all related to each other because they were each and all surrounding and directly in contact with this Tabernacle of God. There they and all their interests touched and centered. And thus it must be for Spiritual Israel, whoever, wherever, whenever. Whoever comes into harmony with the divine arrangement will find such an ordering of divine providence as will bring him into touch with all others who are in fellowship with the Father and his glorious plan.

It is in vain that we seek to have order in the Church or harmony with the brethren except as this common center is recognized. If all look to the Lord for guidance then all are ready for his providential leading, whether it be to move or to stay. If all look to the Lord for their laws and government and guidance in all of life's affairs, then all may be in harmony the one with the other, as recognizing the same central standard of divine atonement. But if this central authority be ignored, or in proportion as it may be ignored, there will be discord and conflict. Undoubtedly this is the difficulty with many of the Lord's people who are striving for peace and harmony and meaning well in their hearts. They fail to recognize the Lord and his Word as their standard, and fail to appeal to this standard only in cases of dispute.

The Human Brain Similarly Ordered

Without claiming that Phrenology has reached a perfection of development—without claiming that any has learned to read accurately from the shape of the human skull the various traits of character therein represented, even while admitting that such a reading of character might be defective, and particularly so with those whose characters have been transformed by the renewing of their mind through the begettal of the holy Spirit — nevertheless we may admit that Phrenology so far as understood fully corroborates the picture given us in the arrangement of the Tabernacle of Israel surrounded by the camp. Thus:—

If we imagine the human skull as spread out flat, we find that the central part would correspond to the Tabernacle and its court; for in the very center of the head on top lies spirituality, and directly in front of it lies veneration. The latter organ would correspond well to the court, the former to the holy. As to enter the holies it was necessary to pass through the court, so to enter into a proper heart-appreciation of the spiritual things it is necessary that we enter in through veneration, reverence for God, which will lead us to worship him and to seek to know and to do his will.

Surrounding these two central organs are others which correspond well to the different divisions of the tribe of Levi—the sacred tribe devoted to the service of God in the court and in the Tabernacle. These organs represent faith, hope, benevolence, conscientiousness, firmness, etc., and then outside of these again come the various organs of the mind, which have to do more particularly with earthly things. These, useful and valuable in themselves, all need to be controlled and guided from the center. Even as in the camp of Israel, the center, the Tabernacle, was not controlled by the tribes, but the tribes were controlled and guided from the Tabernacle. Thus all the talents and qualities of mind and body which we possess, and which are all represented in our brains, are all to be subject to and guided by our reverence for God and our spiritual perception of his will concerning us, which will is to be expressed primarily through the intermediary organs of benevolence, faith, hope, conscience, etc.

Conversion Thus Illustrated

Thus may be illustrated the philosophy of what is known as conversion. Thank God it has not been necessary to understand the philosophy of conversion in order to have and to enjoy that blessing, otherwise very few would have been thus blessed. But it will be of advantage to some to be able to analyze the philosophy of conversion and to see how beautiful and how reasonable a matter it is. The natural man, "without God and without hope, in the world," is like the Israelites as a Jewish horde when in Egypt, disordered, incongruous, slaves to sin, laboring under taskmasters, and knowing not how to escape. The first step toward order is the hearing of the Word of the Lord directing our course to the promised land, out of bondage. This implies the recognition of Moses, the leader whom God has appointed, and obedience to him in fleeing away from sin. . . .

This is conversion—the acceptance of the Lord and his will as instead of self-will—in all of life's affairs: the full consecration of heart and life, time and talents, to the Lord, and the recognition of Christ as our Head or High Priest, our Advocate or assistant in all these matters.

The transformation which then takes place corresponds to the setting in order of the tribes in relationship to the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was recognized as the center of the camp and each tribe had its own place in relationship to it, sometimes here and sometimes there. There was no longer any confusion as to one tribe choosing this or that location, sometimes in a preferred position, and sometimes in a less preferred position; henceforth each tribe had its own position, its own responsibility and its own relationship to the Tabernacle.

Order Is Heaven's First Law

So with the converted heart and head. Previously sometimes selfishness would be in the center and in control, sometimes conscience, sometimes acquisitiveness, sometimes hope and sometimes fear would occupy the center, around which the various organs would group themselves. But now, as soon as the heart is given to the Lord, his organization and his arrangement is recognized, and the various powers of mind and body represented in our brains are fixed in their relationship to the central ones, which henceforth become the dominating ones and always occupy the prominent place of authority. To the truly converted, consecrated Christian, the center from which will proceed all the arrangements of life must be spirituality, which corresponds to the holies in the center of Israel's camp.

This implies veneration for God. Henceforth the various organs must all look to this common center for direction. Acquisitiveness might say how wealth might be acquired, but has no authority to move until first the message shall be received from spirituality and veneration. And this authority must be passed on through the first circle, represented by the Levites: benevolence will have a word to say, so will conscience, so will faith and hope, as to whether or not acquisitiveness may take possession as it proposes. And benevolence, faith, hope and conscience will all surely inquire of the Lord through veneration, spirituality, as to what is the will or mind of the Lord on the subject before giving permission to acquisitiveness to act as proposed.

Combativeness is another of these organs which used to be at times a central one commanding the others, but now it is relegated to its proper place on the outside, at a distance from the center: it cannot act until authority is granted, and the authority can only come through benevolence, faith, hope, conscience, etc., and these again must inquire of veneration and spirituality as to whether or not it would be the proper thing for combativeness to gird on its sword and take the field, and what and how much it may do in any event. If the cause be good permission will be granted, if the cause be evil permission will be refused, and the organ of firmness will see to it that the decisions of the central court are carried out by all the outlying members.

For instance, if combativeness is aroused and wishes to co-operate with selfishness or acquisitiveness in any form, the decision from the central court will be, No! Combativeness may never be exercised selfishly; but if combativeness be aroused in co-operation with conscientiousness for a defence of the faith once delivered to the saints, the decision from the central court will be, Yes! contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Nevertheless benevolence, love, co-operating with caution, will be detailed to see to it that combativeness shall not, even in defence of the faith delivered to the saints, take a harsh and aggressive form of action, but shall be supervised by benevolence, love.

No wonder that worldly people have been astonished to find so radical a change of character and life on the part of some who have come into harmony with the Lord through a full consecration of their hearts to him—some whose minds have been reordered, transformed by the renewing of their wills—by the placing of all the qualities of their hearts and minds in control of and in harmony with the Lord. We sometimes speak of conversion as though it worked a miracle, because its operations worked so wonderful a change in our hearts and lives and sentiments by bringing them under the new management, under the control of the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of a sound mind.

The Glory of the Lord Filled the Tabernacle

In the lesson before us, when the Tabernacle had been constructed and the tents of the Israelites had been ordered in harmony therewith, the first important event was God's recognition of it. This is referred to in the thirty-fourth verse of our lesson in these words, "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle." It was called the Tabernacle of the congregation, or more properly the tent of meeting, not because the Israelites met there as a congregation, not because it was their meeting house, but because they were a holy, separate house or people of God, and in this tent in the center of their camp God made his dwelling-place, and it was here that he met the children of Israel by receiving and communicating with their representatives of the tribe of Levi, through whom, by the Urim and Thummim, the divine will was communicated. Applying this now to us individually, as Spiritual Israelites: When our conversion took place it meant not only the ordering of our minds in accord with the Lord, placing spirituality and veneration first—in the center of our affections—but it meant more than this.

This much we were to do and did do under direction of the Lord's Word. But God then did something more, something very necessary for us, viz., by his holy Spirit we were begotten again to a newness of mind. In other words, the heart which thus ordered itself according to the divine instruction of the Word God recognized. He took up his abode with us, and our meeting-place with him, represented in the organ of spirituality, was blessed by the Lord and lightened. The glory of the Lord filled us. We realized to some extent that we were accepted of the Lord, and the enlightenment of the holy Spirit has since then been with us, an ever-present help and guide: a pillar of cloud, it has blessed us by day in shielding us from the things that would be too trying for us; a pillar of fire by night, it has granted us enlightenment in darkness, and the keeping, protecting power of him who has promised that all things shall work together for our good because we are his and love him and have placed him first in our hearts, and are thus amongst the called ones according to his purpose. Thus the new will ordained of God and instructed from his Word may, as the priest in each of us, have intercourse with the Father in the merit of the great atonement sacrifice.

And this new will, consecrated, anointed, set apart, may bring out the wise decisions of God in respect to all the other organs of our bodies, and show what each may and may not do, and how each may or may not co-operate with the others, and which should be restrained and when, and which should be cultivated and how, that the whole body may be full of light, full of order, full of divine blessing, and that as the people of God we might go onward from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, from strength to strength, and be prepared for the everlasting conditions beyond Jordan in the promised land to which we are journeying—the heavenly city.

A Type of the Future Also

This arrangement of the Tabernacle was not a permanent one. It pictured rather the conditions of this Gospel Age, so far at least as the Church is concerned—the Royal Priesthood, who are now permitted to enter the holies as members of the great High Priest, Jesus, and who during the Millennial Age will with him guide all the people of God who are willing to be led into the grand eternal rest which remains for them. During the Millennium all who desire to become true Israelites, to come into full harmony with the Lord, will find a place in the divine plan: the Royal Priesthood first, nearest the Lord, yea, even at the very gates of his favor, even as the priests encamped immediately in front of the gateway into the Tabernacle courts; and next to these . . . those represented by the Levites in general; and in due course all the families of the earth will come into harmonious order, all looking to God, all seeking to walk in the light of God's favor, and ultimately there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all lovers of sin will have been cut off in the Second Death, and because all others will have come to a full harmony with God through the ministrations of the priesthood.—Z. '07:216-219.

Isaac's Peaceful Career

Genesis 26:12-25.

Golden Text:—"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."—Matt. 5:9.

ISAAC, the child of promise, in whom centered for the time the riches of God's gracious provision for the world of mankind, was not remarkable, either as a boy or a man. His experiences were rather commonplace as a rule. But is it not so with the majority of the Lord's people? Not many great, not many wise, not many learned, not many noble, not many rich, hath God chosen, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 1:26-29; Jas. 2:5.) If all the characters of the Scriptures were notable, the majority of us would feel ourselves so commonplace as to excite our fears that the Lord would have no place for us amongst his elect. We are glad that in divine providence some have prominence, greatness, almost thrust upon them by the necessity or interests of the Lord's plan. We are glad also for those less prominent, in whose hearts the Lord works equally a work of grace, purification, strength of character, to make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. A lesson in this connection is that strong characters may be developed and high ideals attained in the heart and in deed amongst the lowly and obscure. The majority of the Lord's elect are of this kind—"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." —Matt. 11:26.

The name Isaac signifies laughter, yet it would appear to be a misfit so far as the boy and the man were concerned. Retiring, peace-loving, meditative, quiet, he had not the rollicking disposition that might be represented by the name. A probable suggestion is that the laughter connected with his name was the remembrance of the experience of his parents in that matter. (1) We read, for instance, in Genesis 17:17 that Abraham laughed at the idea of a son being born to those so old. (2) In Gen. 18:12 we read that Sarah laughed at the idea of her having a son in old age. (3) In Gen. 21:6 we read that Sarah laughed with joy at the birth of her son. Another thought is that as Isaac was a type of Christ (Gal. 4:28), and the joy typified by his name was a prophecy of the blessing that is yet to come through the glorified Christ to all nations, in harmony with the prediction of the angels—"good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." (Luke 2:10.) But as Isaac was not peculiarly mirthful or joyous, neither was Jesus, his great antitype, nor yet the Church, the body of Christ. Nevertheless there are joys of the Lord which the world cannot appreciate—the experience of all of those who have the divine peace and blessing.

Isaac's Youth and Marriage

Of a very different character indeed was Isaac's elder half-brother, Ishmael — domineering, tyrannical. Not amenable to restraints and reproofs, he made life miserable for Isaac until Abraham, in harmony with the Lord's direction, treated him as an incorrigible, and refused to him and his mother the privileges of the home. (Gen. 21:12.) We are informed that Hagar also had a sneering spirit. (Gen. 16:4.) Separation was not only wise but necessary to the type, as St. Paul shows. Ishmael was 13 years old, or 18 if, as some think, this occurred in Isaac's fifth year. We are to remember the Apostle's explanation of this incident, that it was typical: that Hagar and her son Ishmael represented the Law Covenant and the Jews, while Sarah and her son represented the original Abrahamic Covenant and the Church of this Gospel age. The persecution of the Issac class at the first advent was very manifest, and as a result the Ishmael class, the Jews, have been cast off from divine favor and have had a time of trouble ever since. It is with pleasure that we see in the type, as well as in the direct statement of the Apostle, that the time will come when God's favor shall return to them and they shall return to the Lord, and he shall abundantly have mercy upon them, and we rejoice that this time is now near at hand, even at the door.

When Isaac was forty years of age, according to the custom of the time Abraham selected a wife for him—not that this was an invariable custom of the time, either, for we find that Isaac's two sons, Jacob and Esau, selected their own wives; but as Isaac was intended to be the type of Christ, so the bride of Isaac was intended to be the type of the Church. Hence the selection of the typical bride must be after the manner of the selection of the antitypical Bride. Thus as Abraham sent his servant to select the bride for Isaac, so the Scriptures inform us the heavenly Father sends the holy Spirit to make selection of those who may constitute the Bride of Christ, for, as Jesus declared, "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him." The story of the selection is a beautiful one, and fits well to the calling of the Church, thus:—

The divine guidance was sought and had in the matter of the selection, and this guidance was along practical lines—the approved maiden showed herself hospitable and kindly disposed in that she proffered the drawing of water for the camels which Abraham's servant had brought. It demonstrated her physical strength as well as her quality of heart.

So those who are drawn of the Father to the Son must have certain elements of character to begin with, however these may be afterwards shaped and polished. The kindly, the generous, seem always to have the divine approval; hence we all should be on the alert to cultivate these qualities in our hearts and lives, and as parents and preceptors of the rising generation we should endeavor to cultivate this same quality in those under our care, having in mind the fact that such will be the more likely and the more ready to receive divine blessings of various kinds.

Rebecca's Faith and Its Reward

As soon as Abraham's servant recognized the character of Rebecca he perceived that she would make a suitable wife for his master's son—that the Lord had guided him to her. He at once rewarded her kindness with an earring and bracelets and went with her to her home, where the matter was related to the family, and where Rebecca, with the consent of her parents, accepted the marriage proposal. Thereupon the servant brought forth more jewels and presented them to her, and they came on the journey and met Isaac at the well Lahairoi.

As the limitation for Isaac's bride was that she must belong to the family of Abraham, so the limitation of those called to be members of the Bride of Christ is: (1) That they shall not be sinners, not of the world, but of the "household of faith." Sinners are called to repentance, but not called to be the Bride of Christ—only believers are honored by this call. (2) Only those who have something of generosity and amiability in their characters are approached. (3) The self-sacrifices of these bring blessings in advance from the Lord, typified by the earring and bracelets of Rebecca; for no one can receive the truth and render service thereto without experiencing a blessing from the Lord. (4) After this came the information respecting the riches of God's grace and the invitation to become members of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. The acceptance of the proposition could not be possible if it were with hesitancy; it must be prompt and hearty, and then the servant, the holy Spirit, opens up further treasures and presents them to the betrothed, and the journey begins. (5) That journey not only represents the individual experiences of our lives as we travel on under the guidance of the holy spirit, looking forward to the time when we shall meet the Bridegroom, but it represents also the experiences of the Church as a whole for the past eighteen centuries, approaching to and hoping for the meeting of the Bridegroom and the marriage feast, the joys and blessings that are to follow when we shall be forever with our Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom. (6) As Isaac went out and met the bridal party on the way, at the well, so Christ meets his Church at the end of the journey. (7) The account tells us that when Rebecca recognized Isaac she put on a vail and alighted from the camel. Applying this to the antitype we see that at the end of our journey the Church shall pass beyond the vail and alight from the accessories of the present journey, and be thenceforth under the direct guidance and blessing and in the presence of the heavenly Bridegroom. What joys, what blessings, what glories are implied in this! As Isaac had but one wife, so Christ has but the one Bride, and the present period is for the testing of those who will be acceptable for that position. . . .

Isaac Prosperous But Peaceable

The record shows that Isaac inherited the great wealth of his father Abraham, flocks, herds, gold, silver, servants, etc. And that he increased this considerably is shown in our lesson—"The man waxed great and grew more and more until he became very great: for he had possessions of flocks and of herds and a great household: and the Philistines envied him." At the time of this lesson a drouth had prevailed in the more southern part, and Isaac had moved his establishment to the vicinity of Gerar north to the Mediterranean coast, because of the better pasturage and water. The Philistines had recognized God's favor with Abraham in his great growth, and now they saw the same in respect to Isaac. Not wishing to encourage this growingly influential family they had stopped the wells that the herdsmen of the north should not come their way; but Isaac's herdsmen, not taking the hint, had dug the wells afresh, and this led the king or chief of the Philistines to come out plainly and request Isaac and his retainers to move to other parts, saying, "Go from us; for thou art mightier than we." They knew not when the strife between the herdsmen might mean a civil war, and in the interests of peace they urged Isaac not to remain too close a neighbor. . . .

In compliance with the request, Isaac did change the seat of his encampment a distance down the valley, but again trouble broke out. The Philistines were still jealous and claimed the water wells found by Isaac's herdsmen. But the man of peace would not permit of strife and moved his home again. Still angry feeling continued, and again he moved still farther away, and rejoiced that although the country was poorer, less advantageous every way, nevertheless he had peace for himself and his possessions.

"Blessed Are the Peacemakers"

There is a lesson for the Lord's people here, a lesson of peace: Blessed are those who are peaceable and who are peacemakers—blessed of God. They may not always prosper as well in outward and temporal matters, but they surely will be prosperous in their hearts, in their heart experiences, in their relationship to the Lord; they surely will make the better progress in the fruits and graces of the Spirit, and be the better fitted and prepared for the glorious opportunities soon to come, when, as the antitypical Isaac, associated as members of the Prince of Peace, they shall engage in the work of uplifting and refreshing and blessing all mankind. True, there are times when "backbone" is necessary, when principle is involved, and when retreat would be absolutely wrong; but these cases are rare. Undoubtedly we can often yield, and, as Isaac did, in so doing may find a provision of the Lord for our prosperity. Had the requirement of Abimelech been that Isaac should renounce the worship of the true God we can readily see that the principle involved would have hindered Isaac from yielding; and so with us, we are to note carefully and stand by everything involving principle.

Had Isaac and his servants been less numerous than the Philistines there would have been less merit in his conduct. We are to remember that, according to the words of the Philistines themselves, Isaac's clan was greater than that of the Philistines. For the greater to be submissive, yielding, peace-loving, is peculiarly commendable. Too frequently it is the case that might makes right, and the stronger one declares to the weaker, "Go yourself," with the result of clashing, bitterness, resistance, etc. Let us as the followers of the Lord in such matters take the course of Isaac, and, as the Apostle exhorts, "So far as lieth in you live peaceably with all men": do not stand upon your rights—be willing to sacrifice for the interests of others, or at least to preserve peace between yourselves and others.

"The Lord Hath Made Room for Us"

The Scriptures exhort, "In all thy ways acknowledge him." This is a matter which we feel is too frequently neglected in our day, even amongst the Lord's consecrated people. But Isaac did not forget the source of his blessing—the naming of the well indicates this. "Now the Lord hath made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land." Our blessings increase in value and in efficacy and in the joys they bring to us in proportion as we recognize that they come from above. Let us then more and more—in all the little affairs of life as well as in the great—look to the Lord for his blessing and guidance, and give him thanks and acknowledgment as we perceive his hand in our affairs. So doing we learn to trust him more, and to have blessing ourselves as well as become blessings to others.—Z. '07: 72-74.

7

The Shadow of God's Hand

Bright and fair the sun was beaming
O'er my smooth and easy way,
And my soul moved lightly onward;
Fear and care were far away.
Hope was bright and winged my footsteps,
Eagerly I pressed along,
And the joy of heavenly favor
Filled my heart with praise and song.

I could see my Father's wisdom,
Loving care and sheltering arm,
Leading me through pleasant places,
Guarding me from every harm.
I could feel love's flame arising
High and higher in my breast,
And my lips o'erflowed with gladness,
All was joy and peace and rest.

When at once a voice within me
Seemed to thrill my very soul:
Could I stand if joy departed,
Sorrow flooding all my soul?
In an arid desert lonely,
Would my faith endure the test?
Would my spirit, still undaunted,
Praise him then as when at rest?

This one thing my soul pursueth,
To attain thy perfect love,
Love, unwavering and loyal,
Rising all things else above;
I would have the faith enduring,
Stronger when most sorely tried,
"Spare me not, but prove me, Father,"
Anxiously my spirit cried;

When across my clear horizon
Suddenly a cloud arose,
Spreading wide and lowering darkly,
Threatening my soul's repose.
Stranger voices sounded near me,
Scarce a step was plain before,
But my Father's arm sustained me,
What, then, could I ask for more?

And, while leaning hard upon him,
His sweet peace was given me,
By the Spirit's gentle whisper,
"This is his great love for thee;
Well he knows thy deepest yearnings
To reflect his image bright—
All thy prayers come up before him,
And are precious in his sight.

"And this darkness come upon thee
Is the shadow of his hand,
Never raised except in blessing,
Though thou mayst not understand."
Then my heart grew strong and trustful,
And with joy my soul was stirred;
"Teach me, Lord, to trust thee fully,"
This my prayer so soon was heard.

Fearless then, I started onward,
Compassed by the gloom of night,
For, by Father's love surrounded,
Darkness is as safe as light!
Still I pray, "O, lead me, Father,
By thy goodness and thy might,
Till, beyond time's misty shadows,
Dawns the pure, eternal light."
—Z. '07: 25.

KERNELS

No man can retain divine truth after he has found it, unless he retain the meek spirit in which he first received it, which also implies the right and diligent use of it.—Z. '92:19.

◆

"We who believe do enter into rest"—in proportion to our exercise of faith. He who exercises much faith may have much rest, and may conquer, and possess quietude.—Z. '13: 330.

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J E Maloon

Old Corn Gems

No. 107

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD: AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"Mediator of the New Covenant"

"And to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—Heb. 12:24.

SOME dear brethren seem to have difficulty in harmonizing former and our more recent presentations on the subject of the New Covenant and its Mediator. They seem to get the thought that the latter presentations are contradictory to the previous ones, and that some radical change of sentiment is thus involved. On the contrary our views respecting the **facts** are in no sense or degree altered. We still believe and teach that Christ died for our sins, that without his redemption work there would be no remission of our sins, and in the future no remission of the sins of the world. We still claim that all the virtue, all the merit for sins, is in **his personal sacrifice, finished at Calvary.** What then is the change? Merely we now see that we have for years been using wrong terms when expressing right thoughts. For instance: We have spoken of Jesus as being the Church's Mediator, when we should have said that he is the Church's Redeemer and Advocate and the world's Mediator, because this latter is the Scriptural presentation. We have spoken of ourselves as being blessed by the terms of the New Covenant, whereas clearer light upon the subject shows us that it is Israel and the world that get God's blessing thus, and that the Church gets her blessing under most favorable portions of the original Abrahamic Covenant, symbolized by Sarah and not under the Law (or Hagar) Covenant nor under the New (Law) Covenant symbolized by Keturah.

The Original Abrahamic Covenant

The Apostle declares that God preached the Gospel in advance to Abraham, saying, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14.) The Apostle shows that the original Abrahamic Covenant contained two parts, or two seeds, represented in the two statements, Thy seed shall be, (1) as the stars in heaven, and (2) as the sands of the seashore. The first seed mentioned relates to Christ—Jesus, the Head, and the Church, his Body. The Apostle enunciates and emphasizes this in Galatians 3:11, 29. Abraham's spiritual Seed, like the stars of heaven and the brightness of the firmament, is the channel through which the secondary seed will receive its blessing. The secondary seed of Abraham, likened to the sands of the seashore, represents all the families of the earth, which ultimately will come into harmony with God, during the Millennial Age. As Abraham typified God, the picture shows two classes of God's children, developed through Abraham—Christ and the Church on the spirit plane and the perfected Restitution Class of mankind on the earthly plane.

The Apostle refers to these two seeds, the one developed under Faith and the other under Law and works. The first, the spiritual Seed under the Abrahamic Covenant, is now in process of development. The second, the seed according to the flesh, the Restitution Class, is to be developed under the New Covenant and by its Mediator, according to Law and works and actual perfection and not reckoned by faith merely. Its type was the Law Covenant, which had Moses for its Mediator, but which brought nothing to perfection. The Apostle's words are, "Therefore it (the Abrahamic Covenant, covering the Church) is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the intent that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all"—as Jehovah will be the Father of all the saved, not only of the Church Class, but also of the restituted world. As it is written, "I have made thee a father of many nations."—Rom. 4:16, 17.

All the families of the earth, all the nations that will be blessed (to whom the blessing will become effective) will thereby become the children of God, whom Abraham prefigured. It is to be hoped, then, that we can all see that the original Covenant made with Abraham includes everything that God promised to give, both to the Church and, through the Church to such of the world as will receive the grace of God not in vain. Notice that no additional Covenants were necessary so far as the Divine determination is concerned—it was all in the original Abrahamic Covenant.

Two Covenants Added

If the original Covenant contained the Divine Promise to the full, both for the Church and for all the families of the earth to be blessed through the Church during the Millennium, why did God arrange for two other Covenants, namely (1) the Law Covenant, instituted at Mt. Sinai with the nation of Israel, with Moses as its Mediator, and, (2) the New Covenant, which is to follow and is to bless Israel and the world? We answer that these two Covenants were added for the good and sufficient reason that they further elucidate the Divine Purpose, and, rightly understood, help us to appreciate the operation of Divine love and justice, past, present and to come.

(1) The Law Covenant. What was its object? The Scriptures answer that it was added to the Abrahamic Covenant to fill up the time until the promised Seed should come, to whom the original Covenant applied, and that this was necessary, because of sin, that the high Divine standard for the Seed might be shown. It is certainly a fact that the Law Covenant with the nation of Israel rendered this very service. It set up the standard which approved Jesus and condemned all others. It helped to develop the Jewish nation towards God and towards righteousness. It helped to fit and prepare them for the glorious "calling" of the Gospel, as it ultimately came to them, inviting them to the Divine favor and joint heirship with Messiah in the glorious Millennial Kingdom, upon conditions of faithfulness and following in the footsteps of

their Redeemer. It had a beneficial effect in that, under God's providences, the Jewish nation was the most advanced in righteousness of any nation of the world at the time of our Lord's first advent, so that amongst them several thousands were found fit for transfer from Moses to Christ. Furthermore the arrangements of the Law Covenant provided for certain typical transactions and for prophecies which have been very helpful to Spiritual Israel during this Gospel Age, illustrating to us in the types and shadows of the Law, and enunciating through the prophecies, various matters appertaining to the blessing of the Church during this Gospel Age and to the blessing of the world during the Millennium.

This conglomeration, this mixing, of the matters pertaining to two Ages in the types of the Law Covenant have confused things, to some minds. The Lord hides things from us so as to develop in us the necessity of searching for them. Thus the children of God grow stronger from the Truths, by reason of the difficulties they have in the mastication of them, even as it is with the natural food; those who thoroughly masticate obtain the better nourishment.

Thus we have clearly before our minds the thought that the Law Covenant "made nothing perfect" and added not a whit to the original Abrahamic Covenant, though it gave certain typical foreshadowings in connection with the general plan. That the Law Covenant was never intended to take the place of the original Covenant, is the Apostle's argument. He develops this at considerable length in Galatians 4:21-31. The Apostle addresses Christian believers who, while recognizing Christ as the original inheritor of the Abrahamic Covenant, felt that somehow or other they were still under the Law Covenant, very much as some of us for a time recognized Christ and the completeness of the Abrahamic Covenant, and yet somehow supposed, without Scriptural authority, that we additionally needed the New Covenant and were under it. We now see that the Church, the Body of Christ, is not under either the old Law Covenant, which came to an end, or under the New (Law) Covenant, which has not yet been even sealed.

What we Spiritual Israelites have is the superior portion of joint-heirship with Christ in the Original Covenant represented by Sarah, as the Apostle distinctly declares in Galatians 3:29, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to that promise."

The world is to get all of its blessings and favors of Restitution through the New (Law) Covenant, the second addition to the Original Covenant. This New (Law) Covenant has not yet been instituted, because the Mediator, who is to inaugurate it and to cause its blessings to reach to every member of the race during the Millennial Age, has not yet been completed. The New (Law) Covenant will be inaugurated in the end of this Gospel Age, and will embrace the entire period of the Millennial Age. This is the teaching of the Apostle in our text. Jesus our Redeemer and Head is its appointed Mediator, in the merit of his own sacrifice finished on Calvary. He could have sealed it and could have begun at once its operation, had not the Father "provided some better thing for **us**," his Church, his Bride whom God foreknew as his **members**. This is "the mystery," that the Gospel Age has been devoted to the development of the "body" of Messiah, the Mediator by sacrifice.

In Hebrews 12th Chapter St. Paul points us down to the end of this Age and to the inauguration of the New Age, under the New (Law) Covenant. He shows that its inauguration is typified in the inauguration of the old or typical Law Covenant. He draws the contrast between the two. When the Old Law Covenant was instituted, Moses came down from the mountain and set forth the tables of the Law and sprinkled them with the blood, sealing the Covenant in a sense, and then took of the blood and sprinkled all the people. This was typical of what is to occur shortly. The anti-typical Moses, The Christ (Jesus the Head, and the Church, the Body) will come down from the mount veiled, hidden, because mankind could not endure the glory of the shining presence.

The inauguration of the Law Covenant was accomplished in a typical time of trouble, a shaking of the mountain, the fearing and quaking of the people. The antitype of what occurred at Mt. Sinai will take place at Mt. Zion (the Millennial Kingdom of Christ) as soon as the "election" closes and the new age opens. The Great Mediator (Head and Body) veiled, hiding the glory of the spirit condition, will set forth the Law, and sprinkle it with his blood of the New (Law) Covenant—as Moses took of blood and sprinkled the (Old) Law Covenant in the type. The difference is that Moses sprinkled the tables of the Law with the blood of bulls and goats, but the antitypical Moses, the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, will (symbolically) sprinkle the Law with the antitypical blood of the better sacrifices (antitypes of the bullock and the goat)—"his own blood"—not only the precious blood of Jesus, but the blood of the sacrifices of all those whom he shall have accepted as "members of his Body." Then, as Moses sprinkled all the people at Mt. Sinai in the type, so in the antitype, on a larger scale, the Christ, Jesus and his members, will, during the Millennium, sprinkle all the people, that is bring all mankind to a knowledge of the Truth and to an appreciation of their privileges of full return to harmony with God and his Divine laws and regulations.

"Some Better Thing for Us"

We hope that the Lord has blessed us with great plainness of speech in treating this subject, and that every reader can clearly discern that God's Covenant with Abraham primarily related to the Seed of promise and faith only, and was symbolized by Sarah, who bore the Seed. The Law Covenant, Hagar, bore not the Seed, failing to perfect anything. The New (Law) Covenant costs the death of the Seed in order to pass the earthly rights back to natural Israel and through them to the world of mankind. And this so, not because God could not have done otherwise but because it pleased God to do it thus.

Well did the Apostle declare that there is a **"mystery"** connected with the peculiar relationship of Christ and "the Church, which is his Body." So heavily clouded is this Mystery that the Jews could not see it at all, except the few who were Israelites indeed, and they not until after they had been imbued with the holy Spirit at Pentecost. Even then, as St. Paul pointed out, it was difficult for them to grasp the Mystery, that the Gentiles also were to be fellow-heirs with themselves in these special blessings that appertained to Messiah and the faithful few, the "very elect."

Whoever realizes that the Church is Joint-Heir with her Lord: that those who now suffer with him shall also reign with him by and by, should have no difficulty in seeing that the death of the Church, as the Apostle declares, "fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of The Christ," and that only those who thus have part in the afflictions of Christ will have a share in the glory that shall follow. We are at a loss for words to make this subject more plain than it is already stated in the Scriptures. What we each need is the enlightening of the eyes of our understanding, that will enable us to discern "the deep things of God." But the Scriptures assure us that these "deep things" of the "mystery" are only for the Spirit begotten. —1 Cor. 2:10, 13.

This holy Spirit is one of humility and faith and obedience of heart—and, so far as possible, of word and of deed also. We trust that the Vow is helping many to get into this attitude, where they will be the nearer to the Lord and thus have the more abundant favor and blessing and enlightenment. One thing to be borne in mind is that our sacrifices would be without merit or value; that it is only because our Redeemer adopts us as his members and imputes his merit to us and counts our sacrifices as a part of his own—only thus does any merit attach to anything that we may say or do or sacrifice.

Whoever sees the above clearly must see that during this Gospel Age the branches of the Vine have been in process of development and are a part of it; and that only as they bear the fruit of the Vine will they be retained as members thereof. This picture of the vintage of the Church, the One Vine—Christ—the crushing of all the grapes, and the gathering of all the wine, is a picture of the experiences of the whole Church.

Another picture of the same thing loses sight of the Vine, and represents our participation with the Lord by the Cup itself. Our Lord, after participating of the Cup, gave it to his disciples, urging that they **drink all of it.** That Cup of suffering and self-denial has come down to us during eighteen centuries, and is still with us. It is a prophetic Cup, representing all the sacrifices and all the sufferings of all the **members** of the Body of Christ, from the Head down to the humblest feet members.

The faithful of the past have participated and the Cup has now come to us, and the Master's voice still says, "Drink ye all of it." Soon the last drop of it will be drained and then the sufferings of the Church which is his body—the Body of Christ—will have been completed. Immediately, through the resurrection, the glorious "change" promised shall follow.

Of that Cup of suffering of which the Lord tasted and which he passed on to his followers, and members, he said, "This is the Cup of the New (Testament) Covenant shed for many for the remission of sins. **Drink ye all of it.**" Participate ye all in it. It is not for the world to drink of that cup of the sufferings of Christ. That honor is reserved for his saints. They alone may participate with their Lord in his sufferings. If the blood of the New Covenant be participated in by all the faithful members of the Body of Christ, how could the New Covenant itself be sealed until the members of the Body had all participated? It would be impossible. Whoever sees clearly that which is a "mystery" to the world must see that the work of The Christ in the inauguration of the New Covenant could not begin until the perfecting of his own Body, which is the Church. And the first, the initial feature of the inauguration of the new Covenant, is its sealing with the blood, and all of his blood has not yet been shed.

This sealing of the New (Law) Covenant has nothing to do with the ransom nor with our justification. We are not justified by any Covenant, but by faith in the precious blood of Jesus. Who cannot see that nobody could be **justified by faith** under the New (Law) Covenant? The Law is not a "new" **faith** arrangement but a "new" **work** arrangement. The Old Law Covenant (of **works**) failed only because its mediator could not render the needed aid. The New Law Covenant (of **works**) will succeed because it has a "better Mediator," able to restore to perfection, and ability for **perfect works,** all who will.

Abraham's Three Wives

Abraham had three wives: Sarah, his original spouse; then later Hagar, Sarah's maid, whom she urged upon him as a supposed assistance to God in the carrying out of the Covenant, after a long delay and waiting; and third, after Sarah's death, Abraham took Keturah to wife, and by her had many children, whereas by the primary wife and by the maid, but one each. The Apostle's language justifies us in considering this matter allegorical or typical. The holy Spirit, through St. Paul, tells us that Sarah represented the essence of the original Covenant, and that Hagar represented the Law Covenant. He explains that the Jewish people were in bondage under their Law Covenant and therefore the antitypes of Ishmael, Hagar's son, and that these were cast out from Divine favor, even as Hagar and her son were cast off from Abraham's family by Divine instruction, and to make the type complete. The Apostle introduces this lesson to show us that the Covenant of Grace, under which the Gospel Church is developed, has nothing whatever to do with the Covenant of the Law; that the two were separate and distinct.

Hagar's child might indeed appear to be the child of Sarah for a time, but it was not; even as Sarah's child, Isaac, was in no sense Hagar's son. The Apostle's argument is, "So, then, brethren, we, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise"—the original Covenant, and not children of the Law Covenant. Similarly, we fancy, the Apostle, if writing today to those who claim to be under the New Covenant, represented in the type by Keturah, would tell them plainly, "You cannot be children of two covenants, children of two mothers." If you are children of the Keturah Covenant in any sense or degree, you cannot be the children of the Sarah Covenant; and if you are children of the Sarah Covenant, then in no sense or degree can you be the children of the Keturah Covenant, or New Covenant—which is not yet in existence.

"Children of the Oath"

The original Covenant with Abraham, typified by his wife Sarah, is the one which God bound with an oath, and which the Apostle describes in Hebrews 6:13-20 and which he calls "the hope set before us in the Gospel" and our "anchor sure and steadfast within the veil." We, then, are the children of the oath of God, the children of "the promise." Our begetting promise, through Christ, to the New Nature, is wholly different from the promise by which the Jews were begotten, as the house of servants; and wholly different also from the promises by which restored Israel and all the families of the earth will be begotten to human nature through Restitution processes, as the children of the Keturah Covenant.

What is the difference between the promises by which we came into the family of God and the promise by which others may come into the family of God hereafter? We answer, the differences are very great indeed. God will not deal with the world directly during the Millennium. He has committed all things to his Son, and the Son, in harmony with the Divine program during this Gospel Age, has been accepting as his "members" such as the Father has "drawn" to him, granting them the spirit of adoption and thus bringing them into new spirit relationship. No such promises will prevail in the begetting of other children of God, the "other sheep which are not of this flock." These children of the oath, or children of the promise of God, are the special "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, as the Master declares.

On what basis, different from that of the world, are these acceptable to God? We answer that the world will be accepted only when they reach actual perfection, under the processes of Restitution at the close of the Millennial Age. The Father will have no dealing with the world until, mankind being perfect at the end of the Millennium, Christ shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father. Then men will fall into the hands of the living God; but be perfectly secure, because of their perfection, if they are at heart loyal to God and the principles of his Government.

Jesus Christ (and his Bride and Joint-Heir) will stand as "Mediator between God and men" during the Millennium. All of mankind's communications and relationship to God must come to them through Messiah, and all of God's dealing and relationship with mankind will be in and through the Messiah. How different from that is the dealing of God with the Church of this Age, "Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise." These are "drawn" by the Father, as Jesus declares, "No man can come unto me (now), except the Father which sent me draw him," and whoever cometh unto me, drawn by the Father, I will in no wise reject. (John 6:44.) Some of our Lord's followers were drawn to him of the Father before he had completed the sacrifice for sins at Calvary, and others have been drawn throughout the Gospel Age; as the Apostle declares, "Even so many as the Lord your God shall call." (Acts 2:39.) Here is a reversal of the Divine purpose. The Gospel Church, under the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement, are drawn to the Son by the Father, "Given unto him." The world in the next Age the Father will not draw, but the Lord Jesus will draw them to himself. "If I be exalted I will draw all men unto me." And even after the Son draws them unto himself, he must as the Mediator keep them unto himself until he shall have instructed them, disciplined them, and made their knees to bow and their lips to confess, and taught them the necessary lessons and brought them back to all that was lost, before the Father will have anything to do with them—at the close of the Millennial Age.

Who will say that the children of the free woman, the Sarah Covenant, have not a great advantage every way over the children of Keturah, and not only have they this more favorable reception of the Father, but they receive directly **his begetting** to the spirit plane; as we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath **begotten us again** unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:3.) These are his "elect." As the Apostle says, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the **firstborn among many brethren**."—Rom. 8:29.

Wherein Is the Difference?

Why should God make such a difference in his dealings? Surely there is a logical reason connected with the matter, if we can but ascertain it. And surely it is true that "The Lord God doeth nothing but he revealeth it unto his servants." If all mankind had been at heart "Israelites indeed" there would have been no need of a mediator and a New Covenant—the Abrahamic Covenant would have been quite sufficient. It is because the world of mankind is estranged from God, rebellious against the Divine Law, and lovers of Sin, that the mediatorial work is a necessary one. The Great Mediator (Head and Members) after making "an atonement for the sins of **all the people**," at the close of this age, will take **all the people** in hand, and, by chastisements and corrections in righteousness, cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess, in harmony with the Divine arrangement, or be cut off in the Second Death.

All men are sinners and all are children of wrath and under Divine sentence of death; but there are other respects in which all are not alike. Some hate the chains of Sin, wherein they are held, and long for freedom and for reconciliation to God, while others love the sin and are estranged from God. God is not in their thoughts. Here, then, we have the ground for the difference in God's dealings with the two classes. He takes note of those who are weary and heavy laden; these, feeling after God, if haply they might find him, he is pleased to "draw."

during the Gospel Age, through the knowledge of the Truth, to Jesus, that at his hand they may be justified, and become acceptable, if they will, as "members" of his Body, suffer with him now. Then they will reign with him by and by. The ungodly are not "drawn" or called in consecration with the High Calling of this Gospel Age, but left to be dealt with by their Redeemer, when he shall assume the Office of Mediator between God and men—the world.

But is it not Scripturally declared of believers that "We were enemies of God through wicked works"? And does not that place us on the same level with the world, in enmity against God? We answer, No, there is a difference. The worldly mass are enemies against God, not merely in respect to their works being imperfect, such as he cannot accept, but also and specially because their hearts are estranged from him. They love unrighteousness. Believers, on the contrary, although enemies through wicked works, are not enemies at heart, and God, who reads the heart, deals with them from that standpoint and leads them to Christ, that the merit of his sacrifice may offset the demerits of their sin and their imperfect or wicked works.

But does not the Apostle again say that we "were aliens and strangers and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel"? Yes, we, who were Gentiles, were entirely separated and alienated from God, until Christ came, and we found access to Divine favor through him, whereas the Jew had a measure of Divine favor and opportunity for development, before Christ came. Three and one-half years after Christ's death, St. Paul says, the middle wall of partition or separation between Jews and Gentiles was taken down, so that, in God's providence, the honest-hearted Gentile was no more an alien and a foreigner to God than his Jewish neighbor.

Atonement Not Mediation

There is a difference between Atonement for Sin and mediation between God and the sinner. There are certain senses in which we might correctly say that the person who made atonement for the sins of another was his mediator, but this is not the Scriptural use of the word mediator. The Bible speaks of Christ as the **Mediator of a Covenant,** not as a Mediator for sins. However true it is that he mediated an atonement for the sins of the world, that is not a scriptural form of statement. Believers, as well as all the remainder of the world, need to have an **atonement made for our sins,** as a basis for our reconciliation to the Father. But believers are under a Covenant which needs no mediator, as St. Paul distinctly points out. "A mediator is not of one." *(Gal. 3:20.)* That is to say, Where a Covenant has only one side to it, it does not have, nor require, a mediator. On the contrary, covenants which have conditions demand a mediator, as, for instance, Moses was the mediator of the Law Covenant, and Christ was the Mediator of the New Covenant. Under both of these covenants there is a conditional proposition—"If ye will do those things, I will do this thing. If ye will obey my laws and keep my statutes, I will bless you," etc.

Let us notice carefully why the original, or Sarah Covenant, "The mother of us all," needed no mediator. It was because in it God made no conditional promises. They were all unconditional to whoever would become The Seed. "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." There are no conditions in that promise, and hence, there would be nothing for a mediator to set straight. God himself undertook to choose who should constitute the Seed of Abraham. He chose our Lord Jesus to be the "Head over the Church, which is his Body," and he foreordained, and, in harmony with that foreordination, chose and called, throughout this Age, such as he desired might have the privilege of membership in that Seed of Abraham. There was no place for a mediator in connection with it, for God did his own selecting. As it is written, "Ye are God's workmanship." "The Father himself loveth you." "Whoever is drawn of the Father cometh unto me." "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him."

Take Another Glance

Honest-hearted ones "drawn" of the Father were, indeed, children of wrath, and hence, before they can be received of the Father as sons, he delivers them over to Christ, and Christ's acceptance of them, or justification **by faith in his blood** (not faith in a covenant) makes them ready to be returned again to the Father, if they still so will. It is to these justified ones that the Apostle says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." If these needed to be made **actually perfect** they would need to be left in the hands of the Son for such restitution work as is his alone, and would be held over for the Millennium. But instead they are **justified by faith.** Their faith in Christ, in the merit of his sacrifice, attested by their repudiation of sin, "Is counted unto them for righteousness." Jesus applying his merit on their account. When, afterwards, these made full consecration of themselves to do the Father's will, even unto death, and when they were begotten of the holy Spirit as New Creatures, they became "members" of the Seed of Abraham, members of the Mediator of the New Covenant. Then they by faith passed to a new plane, where no sin or imperfection is imputed to them, so long as they fulfil their consecration Vow and "Walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."—Rom. 8:1.—Z. '09:103-107.

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"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost."

How grateful we should be for such a Shepherd! How can we sufficiently show forth His praise! Truly we can never know this side the veil, "how dark was the night that the Lord passed through," that he might redeem us to God. And from the time we become His sheep He tenderly cares for all our interests, shielding us from every foe and the dangerous pitfalls that lie in our path. —Z. '14:199.

"So Moses the Servant of God Died"

Deut. 34:1-12.

1

OUR Lord alone excepted, no character of history stands out before us so grandly and majestically as that of Moses, the great Apostle Paul, even, being overshadowed by him. If we think of him as a man, we see a sublime grandeur and nobility of character, combining strength with humility, wisdom with love and gentleness. If we consider him as the leader and deliverer of Israel, we find that he accomplished a greater work than any of the kind before or since. If we consider him as the lawgiver, we find in his code of laws justice, wisdom, mercy and an appreciation of human nature far superior to anything of his day, and the basis upon which the laws of Christendom in this twentieth century are built. If we consider him as a statesman, we find him wise, prudent, careful. We see how he brought order out of confusion, and changed a disorganized rabble of over a million into a thoroughly organized and well ordered nation. But it is when we come to consider him as the servant of God that his character shines out most brilliantly. His faithfulness to God; his faithfulness to the trust committed to him as the Mediator for his people; his self-sacrificing spirit in connection with the entire work, indicating that he served not the god of fame or of ambition or of self-love, but the Lord of hosts.

The greatness of Moses would be incomprehensible to us from any other standpoint than that which the Scriptures set forth; viz., that he was under special divine direction as God's servant, and that, therefore, being naturally an able, efficient, humble, good man, had these manifold qualities of his character intensified by reason of the Lord's power working in him and through him for the effecting of the divine purposes.

Moses was now 120 years old; 40 years of his life had been spent as an Egyptian prince, in the court of Egypt, educated, trained, and in the public service as a general and a ruler. The second forty years of his life he was a shepherd in the wilderness because of his love for the Lord, his appreciation of the divine promise, and his preference to share these with his brethren, the Israelites, rather than to continue in the favor of the Egyptians, their enemies and oppressors. This wilderness experience was probably valuable to him, enabling him to transform and transmute the knowledge and experiences already gained into a deep philosophy, the foundation of which was faith in God and respect for his promises. Thus does God sometimes work by natural means to prepare the instruments for his service. The closing forty years of his life were devoted to the exercise of all the knowledge, experience and mental philosophy and faith previously gained, to the service of Israel as their leader, lawgiver, statesman—prophet, priest and king. And now his work was finished—the work which the Lord intended him to do. Another, Joshua, was to take up the work of leader, and he had already, by the Lord's direction, been formally and publicly ordained to this office, and Moses was ready to die.

In considering the fact that Moses was not permitted to go into the promised land, we are to bear in mind that he, as well as the nation of Israel, was being used of the Lord in a typical manner. We are not to go to the extreme of higher criticism, and to think of the deliverance from Egypt as an allegory. It was all true; the history of a series of facts; but truths and facts, under the Lord's guidance, may be so arranged as to be types of still higher facts, illustrations of still higher principles. One of the reasons mentioned why Moses was not permitted to lead Israel into the land of promise was the second smiting of the rock. The smiting the first time (Exod. 17:1-7) was by the Lord's direction, and the waters gushed forth, but the second time (Num. 20:2-12) the Lord said to Moses, "Speak unto the rock," but instead he smote the rock a second time.

In this he spoiled a type, while he made another type. Christ Jesus, the true Rock, was to be smitten but once for our sins, and as a result of that one smiting at Calvary the water of life would be obtained for all true Israelites to all time; and if for a season the flow was stopped it was only necessary that the Rock should be invoked in the name of the Lord, that the waters might again flow forth. Christ dieth no more; death has no dominion over him; therefore in the type the Rock should not have been smitten a second time. But the second smiting, nevertheless, made a new type, because as the Apostle explains, there are some now who crucify Christ afresh, and put him to an open shame—some of his professed followers denying or ignoring the value of the original sacrifice, denying the blood that bought them, are counted as committing the sin unto death—Second Death—and of these Moses became a type, and as a type of a class which would have to do with the antitype of the rock, he was debarred from Canaan.—Heb. 6:4-6.

But even aside from the making of this type, Moses would not have gone into the land of Canaan; because, from another point of view, he was the type of the Law Covenant, which must end before the people can enter into their rest. As Moses was the representative of the Law Covenant, so Joshua became the representative or type of the New Covenant and of its mediator, Jesus, the Deliverer. "The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Law was a pedagogue or guide to prepare and bring the Israelites along to the borders of Canaan, but the Law could never give them rest, could never take them into the land of promise. Christ, the antitype of Joshua, must do that. We are to remember, too, that Moses' error in smiting the Rock, did not involve him in the Second Death, nor will it work any injury to him as respects the future. It was comparatively a trivial matter, and taught him a valuable lesson which he evidently learned to the Lord's pleasement, and his failure to go into the land of promise, therefore, should not indicate a continuance of divine indignation against him, but merely a continuance of the divine purpose in making of him a type of a class who would have to do with the antitypical Rock, the antitypical water, and the antitypical smiting.

We might remark here, too, that those who smote the Lord the first time, at Calvary, have the promise of full forgiveness. They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for him, and the Lord will pour out upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication, and they shall have full opportunity of recompense and reconciliation. (Zech. 12:10.) It is those who, with greater knowledge, and after they have become partakers of the holy spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come, sin wilfully and count the blood of the covenant a common thing—these are they who commit the real sin unto death, and for whom the Scriptures suggest no hope, or further opportunity, because they have sinned wilfully.

Mount Pisgah Views

At this time the Israelites were in the land of Moab, at the northern end of the Dead Sea, opposite Jericho, and nearly in line with the city of Jerusalem. They awaited the Lord's direction, by the pillar of cloud, before crossing Jordan to take possession of Canaan. Here, Moses' work being accomplished, the Lord led him up to Mount Pisgah's top, a lofty peak 3,586 feet above the sea-level. From this point an extended panoramic view was possible—is possible today. Here Moses saw much with his natural eyes, but much more with the eye of faith, seeing the promises which God had made to the tribes of Israel, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and by his own mouth. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. We hear not a murmer respecting the transfer of leadership and the cessation of his own labors. If God had used him in his service to the extent that he was pleased to do, the servant was thankful and satisfied.

"So Moses, the servant of God, died"—not from weakness and infirmity of age, for "his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated";—he died according to the word of the Lord. Throughout his life he had been the Lord's servant, used and blessed as such, protected and kept by the power of God through the many vicissitudes of life, and he who thus kept him, buried him in one of the many little inaccessible valleys of this Mount Pisgah. The Lord not only hid Moses in the grave, but hid the grave, so that no man knoweth its place. This also illustrates the divine wisdom; for, (1) had the place of the grave been known it no doubt would have been an object of veneration amongst the Israelites, a Mecca, to which pilgrimages would have been made, and the man Moses would have been honored, rather than the God whom this man represented, and whose servant and mouthpiece he was. (2) Doubtless, also, the hiding of the grave was typical, and represented that the Law Covenant, which died and passed away, was not to be revived; that the New Covenant, not only displaced, but thoroughly replaced it, so that there would never more be need for the Law Covenant in connection with the bringing of Israel to all the precious promises of God.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time."

This great truth, so beautifully expressed by the poet, finds a grand illustration in Moses. His life and character are a noble example, not only for the Lord's saints, but also for natural men. No one can study the life of Moses, and note its purity, its lofty ideals, its humility, its obedience to the Lord, its faithfulness to his fellows, without being bettered, ennobled, by the contemplation. And each one thus bettered himself by contemplating this noble character, should in turn seek to leave noble and enduring footprints for others, that perchance "some forlorn or shipwrecked brother seeing may take heart again." . . .

The scribe who wrote the Book of Deuteronomy at Moses' dictation finished its account as a historian, describing the death and burial of Israel's great leader and declaring the great honor in which he was esteemed, recounting his mighty works, and ascribing these as did Moses himself, not to Moses personally, but to the Lord, who sent him to do them.

Joshua the New Leader

Joshua was now eighty years of age, and was accepted by the Israelites as Moses' successor without murmur. They had, doubtless, learned some valuable lessons in their wilderness discipline. Joshua, it will be remembered, was Moses' companion when he went up into the mountain, Sinai, and there received the Law, and indeed throughout the wilderness journey he seems to have been the one above all others upon whom Moses could thoroughly rely. He and Caleb were the two spies who brought the favorable report, declaring that by the help of the Lord Israel might go up and assuredly take possession. In the change of leadership Israel learned another great lesson; viz., that their confidence and trust must not be in man; that so long as they recognized the Lord as their Leader they might feel safe and confident; because, although others might pass away, the Lord would abide faithful and could raise them up at any time just such leaders as he saw best.

There is a lesson in this matter for spiritual Israelites as well. We are not to put our trust in leaders, but in the Lord. This does not signify that we are not to trust leaders, and not to acknowledge leaders, for all the history of the Lord's dealings with his people, the typical as well as the antitypical, shows us that he is pleased to use human agencies as his representatives in the teaching and leading of his people from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge. The lesson to be learned is that the Lord is thoroughly competent to manage his own work, and that while we may look for his leading through human agencies our trust is not in them, their wisdom, their strength, but in the Lord's wisdom and strength, guiding them and us through them.

Another lesson here set forth is found in the words, "Israel hearkened unto him [Joshua] and did as the Lord commanded Moses." Joshua was to be followed only as the people could realize that he was following God's instructions, given through Moses—through the Law. In the antitype the great Deliverer Jesus, will be the commander of the people, will bless the people during the Millennial age, and they must hear him and must obey him, but all that he will speak and all that he will order, will be in full accord with the divine law, as represented by Moses. The Christ, during the Millennial Kindom, will attempt nothing on behalf of mankind in violation of the laws of righteousness, the laws of God. But everything in the way of lifting mankind up, will be by magnifying the Law of God, and making it honorable, and assisting all to conform their lives thereto, but not by that Law Covenant which is forever dead.—Z. '02:282-284.

"God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

Acts 27:33-44.

7

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses."—Psa. 107:6.

NOT long after Paul's discourse before Festus and Agrippa, opportunity offered for sending him a prisoner to Rome, in accordance with his own appeal. He was not sent alone, but in company with other prisoners and under a strong guard. The journey from Caesarea to Rome was by water on merchant vessels, and was probably in the fall of the year, when the storms on the Mediterranean are frequently very severe, sometimes lasting for several days, as in the case mentioned in this lesson. The storm lasted for fourteen days, and was evidently unusually severe. The dangerous season for navigation was reckoned from September 14 to November 14, at which time all navigation in the open sea was suspended for the winter. It is presumed that this storm occurred about September 25.

Doubtless, were we able to look at affairs from God's standpoint, as we will be able to view them by and by, we should see more reason than we now are able to discern why the Apostle's journey to Rome should have been attended with such trying experiences, mental and physical, as were incidental to the shipwreck, wintering on the island of Malta, etc. Possibly the Apostle's faith was being tried; possibly it was being rooted and grounded by these experiences. The Lord had distinctly informed him in a vision that he should go to Rome as his ambassador. He was now on the way, and on several occasions matters looked serious; it seemed as though he would never see the capital of the world; never have the privilege of presenting the truth to the brethren residing there, to whom he had already sent the Epistle to the Romans; never have the opportunity of laboring in their midst, as he had hoped and promised to do.

When in port at Crete a conference was held respecting the wisdom of wintering there or of going on, and the Apostle gave his opinion that it would be unsafe to go on. This may have been the result of some inspiration, but quite possibly was merely the result of his own judgment of the weather, etc. He had already had large experience in seeing disasters, as we are informed in one of his epistles written previous to this time: "Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep." (2 Cor. 11:25.) Besides, his trade as a sail-maker would naturally bring him in contact with sailors, and interest him in all matters pertaining to the craft. Those in command, however, decided to proceed on the journey, and encountered the disastrous storm of our lesson. During those fourteen days the Apostle had abundant opportunity to fear and doubt and question the Lord's providences, and apparently it was not until the night of the thirteenth day of the storm that the Lord sent an angel to the Apostle, with the consoling message that he should not fear—"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." (Vs. 24.) We may safely assume that the Apostle, during these testing days, remained heartily loyal in faith toward God, and that this message at the close was in the nature of an encouragement and an expression of approval.

We may draw a good lesson from this incident, not only in respect to our own affairs in life,—that the Lord may lead in mysterious ways regarding our temporal matters and our service for him and his cause;—but we may additionally apply the lesson in a general way to all spiritual testings and trials. The Lord gives us, for instance, assurances of his love and care, and of the ultimate outcome of the narrow way to all who faithfully follow in the steps of Jesus; but meantime he may permit trials and difficulties of various kinds to come as storms upon us, threatening our very destruction, threatening the overwhelming of our spiritual life, darkening the sky of our hopes with the thunder-clouds of our enemies' threats and Satan's roarings. Our duty is to let the eye of faith be undimmed by these various terrible conditions,—to let our hearts be firmly fixed upon him who has promised, and who is able also to perform. Thus,

"When the storms of life are raging,
Tempests wild on sea and land,
I will seek a place of refuge
In the shadow of God's hand.

"Enemies may strive to injure,
Satan all his arts employ;
God will turn what seems to harm me
Into everlasting joy."

The expression, "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee," is very meaningful. It reminds us of Abraham's prayer for Sodom—peradventure there were even five righteous persons, God agreed to save the city. There is no suggestion in these words of the "fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of men," as that false teaching is now advocated by many who have a noble impulse. The thought, on the contrary, is that there was only one man on that ship who was in personal relationship to God. The others, whatever their natural traits of character, had never come into personal relationship with the Father. Another thought from the words is that the divine care going with the saints may prove a great blessing to their companions, even though, as in this case, they be worldly and unregenerate. This thought is particularly applicable in the earthly families of God's people. The believing consecrated father or mother is the direct subject of divine care; for of the angels it is written, "They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation," and, in ministering to these, very frequently (indeed, we may suppose generally) those of their families who have not come into full relationship with the Lord are to some extent included under the protecting care. Elsewhere the Apostle points out that in some respects the believing wife has a blessed influence over her husband; or the believing husband a favorable influence over the wife in regard to the children, else the children would be accounted unholy. (1 Cor. 7:14.) This is another illustration of the same general lesson that divine care, though specially for the saints, includes all of their interests of every kind. This does not necessarily imply earthly prosperity, wealth, preservation from accident, shipwreck, etc., as in Paul's case, and yet it does always mean, in some sense and in some degree, an advantage. Let us take from this thought all the comfort we can. All things shall work together for good to the Lord's saints, and those who are nearest and dearest to them will surely be participants to some extent in their interest and in the divine care.

Promptly after receiving the assurances of the safety of all on board, the Apostle made the matter known to the ship's company, and manifested his own faith in the message by cheerfulness and breaking of his fast, and advising all the others to do likewise. His spirit was contagious; they were all cheered, and doubtless they were all impressed not only by the fact to which the Apostle called their attention — namely, that this disaster had come upon them by their failing to follow his advice —but also by the evidence of God's special favor toward him in connection with the knowledge of their ultimate rescue. . . .

Another thought properly connected with this lesson is the absence of any suggestion of a revival service being held on board the boat. Neither Paul nor Luke nor Aristarchus are reported to have made the slightest effort, except as their lives were living epistles. It is barely possible that religious services may not have been permitted on the vessel; but, anyway, we know from the Apostle's general course of conduct, that he did his fishing for men amongst rather different classes. As we understand the matter, the seamen of that day were of a coarse and ignorant class. We cannot doubt that the Apostle would have been glad indeed to have served any of his companions had he found in them the hearing ear—according to the Master's words, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." That the sailors were not in a condition to receive or appreciate the gospel is evident from the lesson; because they were selfishly intent upon using the only small boat available for their escape, and premeditated leaving the soldiers and the prisoners on the vessel. We mark the spirit of selfishness as totally unbecoming in anyone begotten of the spirit of God, and contrast it with the spirit of the Apostle, as generous, loving, considerate of others. A similar test shows us that the soldiers in general were not of a class likely to have a hearing ear, because, when perceiving that the vessel would go to pieces, and that thus some prisoners might escape, they counselled their destruction. "The liberal heart deviseth liberal things," and all of the Lord's consecrated people should not only have the noble impulses coming to them because they are the Lord's and because they have tasted of his grace, and been made partakers of his spirit, but, additionally, they should see to it that this spirit prevails in them; that it is manifest in all the affairs of life. They should see to it that they do not crush out the noble impulses which would properly come to them; that, on the contrary, they foster them and encourage them and develop them more and more. Thus we grow in grace as we grow in knowledge, by obedience to the things which we learn.

The centurion alone seems to have profited by the experiences. He alone seems to have read the Apostle's living epistle to any advantage, and upon him it did make an impression, for while he would not have objected so much to the killing of the other prisoners, who probably were seditious characters and worthy of death, he saw no way to make an exception of Paul, and for Paul's sake, therefore, all the prisoners' lives were spared.

Notwithstanding the Apostle's assurance of the Lord that the lives of the entire ship's company were given him, that all would be saved, he realized the propriety of using all proper diligence in cooperation with the promise. Hence, when he discerned the evident intention of the sailors to escape in the small boat, leaving the passengers, unable to guide the vessel, at the mercy of the sea, he communicated the facts to the centurion, pointing out the necessity of compliance with reasonable precautions to insure the fulfilment of the divine promise. So we all should understand that we have something to do in realizing the gracious promises of God to us. In connection with the affairs of this present life he has promised that our bread and water shall be sure, but this does not imply that we shall neglect reasonable opportunities for securing these. . . . God is thoroughly capable and thoroughly willing to perform all of his part in connection with every matter, but it is to our advantage that he calls upon us to show our faith by our works—by our co-operation with him in all reasonable ways. He does not expect us to perform miracles; but he does expect us to do what we are able to do both in respect to present things and eternal matters. By and by the Apostle's predictions were fulfilled, and the entire ship's company, some by swimming and others by floating on wreckage, reached the land. We notice again that the Apostle did not propose, on reaching land, to have a general revival service; he was not bent on exciting men's minds. . . . The time for bringing in the world is not yet; hence the Master's words in prayer, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, that they all may be one . . . that [ultimately, in 'due time'] the world may believe." The gathering of the elect class for the Kingdom is under disadvantageous conditions which will thoroughly test them, and make their way so narrow that few find it, and still fewer make progress in it. When God's time for dealing with the world shall have come, the powers of heaven and of earth will co-operate with the glorified Church in making the gospel so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

So far as the record shows, the Apostle and his companions did no mission work amongst the barbarians of the island on which they were wrecked, nor amongst the soldiers and sailors, their companions during that winter. They left no Church there;—we may safely presume that they found no hearing ears. The lesson to us from this should be that we are not to expect the conversion of the world nor anything akin to it. We are to expect that the Lord will find with the truth a sufficient number to complete the elect Church, and then, with the power and authority of the Kingdom, establish righteousness and cause the knowledge of himself to fill the earth and bless the whole world through the Church.—Gal. 3:29.—Z. '03: 173-175.

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RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY

Mankind will not be accountable for the violation of a perfect standard, but each will be held responsible in proportion to his own knowledge and ability. During the Millennium, the rule will be such as would now be considered just in a well regulated family. The stronger child is given the heavier burden to carry. So it will be during the coming Age. Each one will be accountable for what he can bear. He will not be held responsible for perfection and condemned for inability to reach it, but will be judged according to his ability.—Z. '13: 152.

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It is not for us to determine positively those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit and who have subsequently repudiated the merit of our Lord's atonement sacrifice on our behalf, but it is for us to recognize that all who take such a step wilfully, intelligently, deliberately, have fallen out of divine grace and have become a second time children of wrath, and that their case is a hopeless one, that they will be subject to the Second Death. It is respecting this form of sin that the Apostle declares, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that you should pray for it." Prayers for those who have taken themselves deliberately out of the Lord's hands and rejected the precious sacrifice which he provided for their covering would be unavailing, useless.—Z. '07:154.

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The Wisdom of God is a Mighty Deep, and He has a great and wise Plan! He had purposed that all of His intelligent creatures—angels, cherubim, seraphim, and humans—who would gain eternal life, must be absolutely loyal to Him, and hence that they should all be tested in respect to their loyalty. They must all be tried and tested characters. It was His purpose, therefore, that all His intelligent creatures in Heaven and on earth should be brought to perceive His goodness and worthiness of all praise, that they might be able to exclaim from the heart: "Blessing and honor and might be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne . . . **forever!**"—Z. '14: 99.

Satan has become a worker of miracles. This is a token that his "house" is tottering to its fall—else it would not need support so opposed to the general policy of Satan—as our Lord declared. If Satan cast out Satan his house is divided against itself and **cannot long stand.** (Mark 3:23-26; Matt. 12:26.) He has long palmed himself off as a teacher—a light bearer, clothed in light; but Satan in the role of faith-healer is a novelty belonging chiefly to our day—though, undoubtedly, he has had to do with the relic-miracles of Papacy for centuries. The worshipping of a relic-bone of St. Anne or of the "holy shroud" or of a "nail from the cross" served for less intelligent people in a less intelligent epoch; but now, and amongst more enlightened people, faith and prayer are more apt to deceive, and he is using and blessing these.—Z. '02: 375.

◇

THE THOUGHT OF GOD

"I look to Thee in every need, and never look in vain;
I feel Thy strong and tender Love, and all is well again.
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

"Discouraged in the work of life, disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears, I sink beside the road;
But let me only think of Thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

"Thy calmness bends serene above, my restlessness to still;
Around me flows Thy quickening life, to nerve my faltering will.
Thy presence fills my solitude;
Thy providence turns all to good."
—Z. '16: 230.

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STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS' GENERAL CONVENTION

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Convention Hall, Eagles' Hall, 535 Homer Street - Phone Seymour 2216
S.F.B.S. Hall and Dining-Room, 666 Homer Street - Phone Seymour 1876
SECRETARY - - - - - - Bro. Biddle

SATURDAY, June 30th—

"SONGS OF SOLOMON" DAY

"Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious."—Psa. 66: 2.

Chairman - - - - Bro. Percy Rogers
Pianist - - - - - Sr. Clara Hogen
10: 30 A.M.—Address of Welcome .... Bro. Heard
Response .... Bro. Neff
11: 00 A.M.—Study, Songs of Solomon, 4: 3 .... Bro. Hanham
12: 15 P.M.—Fellowship Lunch.
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. McCarter
2: 30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony .... Bro. Hogen
3: 15 P.M.—Intermission.
3: 30 P.M.—Study, Songs of Solomon, 4: 3 .... Bro. Bartlett
5:00 P.M.—Fellowship Tea.
Pianist - - - - - Sr. Rae Willison
7:30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony .... Bro. B. Cousins
8: 00 P.M.—Study, Songs of Solomon, 4: 4 .... Bro. Cooper

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SUNDAY, July 1st—

"OLD CORN GEMS" DAY

"I will abundantly bless her provision."—Psa. 132:15.

Chairman - - - - Bro. Maxwell
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Edwards
10: 30 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10: 45 A.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (O.C.G. 107: 2) .... Bro. Haller
12:00 Noon—Fellowship Lunch.
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Russell
2: 30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony .... Bro. Biddle
3: 15 P.M.—Intermission.
3: 30 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (O.C.G. 107: 3) .... Bro. O. Kuenzi
5:00 P.M.—Fellowship Tea.
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Heard
7: 30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony .... Bro. Holbrook
8: 00 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (O.C.G. 107: 5) .... Bro. Palmer

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MONDAY, July 2nd—

"TEMPLE" DAY

"And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house: and a man was standing alongside of me."—Ezek. 43: 6. (Leeser).

Chairman - - - - Bro. McCarter
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Biddle
10: 30 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10: 45 A.M.—Temple Study, Question 85 .... Bro. Sellars
12:00 Noon—Fellowship Lunch.
Pianist - - - - - Sr. Jacobskoetter
2: 30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony .... Bro. Vance
3: 15 P.M.—Intermission.
3: 30 P.M.—Temple Study, Question 119 .... Bro. Edwards
5:00 P.M.—Fellowship Tea.
Pianist - - - - - - Bro. Sellars
7: 30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony .... Bro. Barrett
8: 00 P.M.—Temple Talk .... Bro. Heard

LOVE FEAST

PREREQUISITE TO A CONVENTION BLESSING

Let us not forget, dear friends, that no matter how beautiful the surroundings and favored are the conditions and fellowship, our share in the blessing will be proportionate to our readiness of heart to receive it! Let each one purposing to attend prepare his heart in advance for a blessing: the words of the Apostle constitute one of the best prescriptions we know of for such preparation; he says, "Let us put away all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." (2 Cor. 7:1.) With prayer and supplication let our request for the divine blessing be presented at the throne of grace, that the Lord may open to us the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing as we shall not be able to contain—such a blessing as will overflow from those who attend the Convention to the other dear ones at home not thus privileged.

The condition upon which the Lord promises this outpouring of his blessing is that we bring our tithes into the storehouse; that we pay our vows unto the Lord; that we seek to appreciate and live up to our consecration, and to develop in harmony therewith more and more of the spirit of our Master—the spirit of Love. Come desirous of an opportunity for comforting and strengthening and refreshing others as well as with the desire to be comforted yourself. Thus drawing nigh to the Lord according to his arrangements we shall be sure to have his smile and his blessing.—Z. '08: 245.

J. H. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 108

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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A Man After God's Own Heart

Psalm 32.

Golden Text:—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

AFTER a most prosperous career, about thirty years from the time of his anointing and when he was somewhere about fifty years of age, King David fell into most grievous sins. In quick succession he violently broke three of the ten commandments. He coveted Uriah's wife; he committed adultery with her, and he indirectly murdered her husband. Dividing the ten commandments into two parts, the one appertaining to the Lord and the other to humanity, King David certainly violated the second portion about as grievously as could be possible. A fouler record than this of man's inhumanity to man can scarcely be imagined. The Scriptures offer no apology, nor do they in any degree shield the offender or justify his course. In view of these admitted facts skeptics sometimes inquire, "How is it that such a man is regarded as a great prophet of the Lord? How is it that of him it is said that "He was a man after God's own heart"? Does God approve of such a course as his, represented by those sins"?

We reply: Those transgressions do not represent David's course of life. They were exceptions; they were contrary to his heart; they were repented of; they were punished; David was forgiven. Today's lesson is intended to bring this matter fully and clearly before our attention; to show us the underlying principles connected with what God approves and disapproves in his creatures. There is a philosophy connected with all of the divine dealings, the appreciation of which is helpful to such as desire to be in harmony with the Lord, because it will enable them the better to govern their course of life, that we may also be as was David, men and women after "God's own heart"—such as please him.

One Peculiarity of the Bible

The Bible holds up before us the naked facts of its heroes as no other religious book does, and in this particular it commends itself as truthful testimony of the Lord. It tells not only of Samson's strength, but also of his weaknesses. It tells of Rahab's favor and of her previous immorality. It tells of Peter's denying the Lord with cursings, as well as his noble traits and faithfulness to death. It tells us that amongst the early Church was a Judas as well as an Ananias and Sapphira. It tells of Adam's disobedience and condemnation to death, as well as of Christ's obedience and his voluntary sacrifice for the redemption of Adam and incidentally his race. So, then, the mention of David and his experiences in sin, sharply contrasted with the majority of his experiences as a faithful servant of God, is not our keeping, but the Scriptural usage, though it is out of accord with the custom of men and of other religious writings. Instead of upsetting our trust in the Lord and his Word, these facts only strengthen our faith and give us assurance of the truthfulness of the narrative and the good intentions of their writer, and of the wisdom and power of God in respect to the use of all these weak servants in connection with the ministry of the Truth.

It might be said in extenuation of King David's course that in ancient times kings were accorded despotic powers and esteemed to be above the laws of their realm. This, however, is no real excuse, for King David understood well that he was not superior to the divine law, but on the contrary amenable to it. We find even amongst heathen kings a much higher standard of morality, a more close approach to the requirements of the divine law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [note the attitude of King Pharaoh towards Abraham's wife. (Gen. 12:18, 19) Similarly the conduct of King Abimelech.—Gen. 20:2-5, 9-11.]

Compassion, Forgiveness, Sin-Covering

Another peculiarity in respect to the Bible is that the God which it reveals is a merciful one The gods of the heathen are cold, merciless, terrible—deficient of any attribute of love and compassion. The God of the Bible commends himself to us in that "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly," and made it possible for God to be just and yet be also the justifier of repentant sinners believing in Jesus and returning to his favor through faith in and obedience to Jesus. This is the essence of the lesson, and we have no hesitancy in saying that David's sincere repentance for his sins and the declaration of God's forgiveness and the continuance with David of divine favor have been a lesson of great value to many poor, weak, fallen members of our race, as they have attempted to come into the presence of the holy Jehovah and have realized their own blemishes and unworthiness of his favor. Well do the Scriptures declare, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mightest be feared," reverenced. Moreover, it is this quality of the divine character that calls forth more than fear, more than reverence from those who appreciate it; it calls forth love; as it is written, "We love him because he first loved us, and sent his Son to be a satisfaction for our sins." Well has the poet declared that this is

"Love Divine, All Love Excelling"

This love of God, as we come to appreciate it, becomes a constraining, drawing, influencing power in the hearts and lives of his people. Thus the Apostle declares, "The love of Christ contraineth us," for if one died for all, then all were dead (under dying conditions): and we who live (we who through faith in Jesus' sacrifice have passed from death into life—justification) should henceforth live not unto ourselves (selfishly), but unto him who died for us.

The Psalm which constitutes our lesson is supposed to have been composed by the Prophet after his heart had returned to peace with God through assurance of divine forgiveness of his sins. Its opening sentence takes this standpoint. David was the blessed man who had experienced divine forgiveness and covering of his transgression, his sin. He was the man to whom the Lord no longer imputed iniquity and in whose heart was no deception, no secret longing for sin, with merely the restraints of fear, but who had a heart and mind fully turned away from sin and in absolute accord with divine justice and all of its righteous requirements.

Instead of rebelling against the laws of God as hindrances to wilfulness and wickedness, the King delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated therein by day and by night. He was pleased henceforth to measure all of his conduct, yea, his thoughts also, by the divine standard, realizing that these were not only righteous altogether, but that every contrary course would surely meet out to him discomfort, trouble.

Groaning All the Day Long

Verses 3 and 4 briefly rehearse the King's unhappy experiences during nearly a year. The King's transgression began in his mind, as do all sins. It is on this account that the Scriptures urge the Lord's people to "Keep their hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life." The King coveted his neighbor's wife, and in the language of our God, "He committed adultery with her in his heart." The first step of sin having been taken the King's conscience was hushed to sleep in some unaccountable manner, while the strength of his vigorous mind was turned aside to the gratification of unholy desires. These accomplished, his case seemed to him hopeless except in one direction. Regret and remorse, already begun in his mind, brought terrors as he realized that under the Jewish Law both parties were to be stoned to death at the instance of the wronged person. Hence his command to his chief general, Joab, that Uriah, the wronged husband, be placed in the front of the battle and then be deserted by the remainder of the corps, that he might be slain by his enemies. Joab understood the situation. Indeed, the whole matter probably leaked out, and poor David was in serious trouble every way. Not only had Uriah been one of his prominent, valued men, but the grandfather of Bathsheba, Ahithophel was King David's chief counsellor in State. That the incident did lead to an estrangement between this man and his sovereign is quite evident; later on in Absalom's rebellion he joined his cause as against the king. Apparently, too, these various burdens upon David's mind and heart brought upon the king a spell of sickness.

Sin is always a disturbing element under all conditions, and more particularly as the sinner has light and responsibility and therefore condemnation of conscience. Indeed, we may well suppose, as the Psalmist intimated, that the chiefest of his troubles consisted in his separation from the Lord; his realization that the Lord's favor was justly turned from him, and that in a certain sense he was forsaken of the Lord as an intelligent transgressor of his Law. It may, indeed, be generally recognized as a principle of the divine government that anything which separates the Lord and his people brings upon them the deepest melancholy, and incidentally is sure to affect their health. On the contrary, we may well realize it as a fixed principle that "the peace of God" is sure to be favorable to physical health and happiness. Thus continually we find amongst the Lord's people that as they grow strong in the Lord there is very apt to be a measure of physical rejuvenation also.

The Prophet's Parable

Apparently for a time the King had smothered his conscience; had, perhaps, come to think of himself as a sovereign to some extent exempted from the laws governing others, and had this condition been allowed to progress it might have meant a complete estrangement of the King from the Lord. But because he had made a covenant with the Lord and the Lord had accepted him and warranted unto him "the sure mercies of David," therefore he was not allowed to pass into a comatose condition morally, but the Lord sent the Prophet Nathan, who, by a parable of the wealthy man stealing a sheep from a poor man, aroused in the King a sense of justice and a demand that the thief should be severely punished. It was then that the Prophet declared, "Thou art the man," explaining to him that he had not only stolen Uriah's wife, but had sinned still more grievously, and that he must expect chastisements from the Lord for his wrong doing.

Honest at heart the matter appealed to the King immediately, and he saw himself a grievous sinner. He went to the Lord and said, "Against thee and thee alone have I sinned and done this great evil in thy sight." True, he had sinned against Uriah, but since the latter's death there was no means of making amends for his misdeeds; no restitution was possible. To the Lord only could he go asking forgiveness. Although the Lord is very gracious and very merciful, he apparently permitted David to lie under the lashings of his conscience for a considerable time before he restored unto him the joys of his countenance. This should not intimate an unwillingness on the divine part to forgive, but the wisdom of divine grace which will permit the lesson as a means of blessing and as a safeguarding against the future.

Wonder is often expressed that some of the most notorious evil-doers in the world appear to have no conscience, no realization of their own wickedness; and still more wonder is expressed that these often pass through life with no chastisements, no punishments for sins such as came upon King David for his sins. The explanation of the situation is given by the Apostle, saying, "Some men's sins go before unto judgment, and some follow afterward." The world in general will find that transgressions in the present life, violations of conscience, have a degrading influence upon them which will make their climbing from sin and imperfection to righteousness and perfection during the Millennium all the longer and more difficult. Thus the judgment or penalty for their sins will follow after and they will be obliged to reckon with them during the Millennium. On the contrary, the Lord's consecrated people of the Gospel Age, and his specially consecrated people of the Jewish Age, shall have had their stripes in the present life, because they are not to share with the world in the experiences of stripes, disciplines, etc., during the Millennium, but to do so now that they will be ready for a share in the resurrection of life; to come forth from death perfect beings in full harmony with God. This constitutes an ample explanation as to why the following is true. That the Lord's true followers receive chastisements, stripes, for their correction while the world in general escapes, except in so far as human laws and nature's laws may chastise them: or in a case such as the Amalekites and Amorites: their iniquities came to the full, reaching the point where to have allowed them to go further would have been inconsistent with the divine program, and they were cut off from life to hinder them from greater degradation.

The Lord's Chastening Hand

In one of the Psalms David wrote, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Verses 3 and 4 tell us something of the King's experiences under the rod of chastisement, which the pride of the Lord's favor calls elsewhere, "The light of thy countenance." At first the King kept silence. He was ashamed of himself and knew of nothing he could say to the Lord in extenuation of his conduct. But the burden grew heavier and heavier for both mind and body. He seemed to age rapidly that year. His "bones waxed old"; he became enfeebled prematurely. Day and night the Lord's chastening hand was heavy upon him, so that all the freshness, vigor and joy were consumed as by a drouth. What a poetic picture of a child of God under the ban of divine displeasure—mourning after a manner that the world could not understand! The result, however, was joyous, because when the Lord restored to David the light of his face, and again when David's cup ran over with divine favor and blessing, he was able more than ever to appreciate the value of the Lord's smile. All of the Lord's people must learn the value of the blessing of the Lord in the fellowship divine. Here they can sing,

> "O, let no earth-born cloud arise
> To hide thee from thy servant's eyes."

Fortunately not all of God's dear people need such severe discipline. Nevertheless, for all there is the comforting thought that even if any should be taken in grievous sin, there is still mercy with the Lord, which is to be sought for. But still more are the blessings for those children who possess more of the Lord's character, so that from their hearts they can say, "I delight to do thy will, O God; thy law is written in my heart." These also require lessons, chastisements, for even our dear Redeemer himself "learned obedience from the things which he suffered." He learned the cost of obedience, as he has since learned the value thereof in the Father's estimation — who raised him to glory and immortality. Similarly all his followers must learn in his school. Each one whom the Father will receive must be an under-study of the great Chief Shepherd. Each one must by experiences learn the value of the Father's smile and fellowship and gracious promises for the present and the eternal life.

Thou Forgavest the Iniquity

Various erroneous views are entertained respecting the forgiveness of sins and the stripes which sometimes follow after the sins have been forgiven. King David's experiences demonstrate the truth on this subject. After he sinned there was a period in which he seemed to appreciate the facts—their enormity. Then came all the force of awakening and self-abasement and contrition of heart and humbling before the Lord in acknowledging the sin, in confessing the transgression before the Lord. Then came in due course the Lord's forgiveness and by and by the King's appreciation of the fact that he had been forgiven, and, as a result, the restoration of the joys in life's experiences. Nevertheless we find that the end was not yet; that years afterwards the Lord allowed a very severe, heavy discipline to come upon the King and his family, apparently as a retribution. Absalom's rebellion against his father, King David, and all the train of evil experiences which followed as a part of the same, were recognized by David himself as permitted of the Lord as a chastisement on account of his transgression which had been forgiven.

How can this be understood? How can a sin be forgiven and yet punishment be inflicted on its account? The right thought on this question is that divine forgiveness signifies that God gives over or relinquishes his indignation against the sin and the sinner and deals with the sinner henceforth from the standpoint of favor. Justice, however, still maintains a hold and must be satisfied. Justice knows no forgiveness. It requires a full payment, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Applying the matter to ourselves, we remark that Justice has been satisfied so far as "believers" are concerned by the death of our Lord Jesus. His merit has been appropriated to us. Is this only a part of the demands of justice? We reply that it was for all of our wrong-doing or short-coming or such proportion of it as was unwilful. In a word, God's provision in Christ for our forgiveness does not cover a wilful sin, of which the Apostle says, "He that sinneth wilfully is of the devil." It merely covers the unwilful sins, or in the case of sins that are partly of weakness, partly a temptation and partly of wilfulness, it covers all the unwilful features, but leaves us responsible for whatever portion of wrong-doing on our part was wilful; hence the Apostle said to the Church, "If we sin wilfully after we have received a knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."—Heb. 10:26, 27. . . . The sins of the Lord's people repented of are graciously forgiven in the sense that divine disfavor and withholding of the Lord's countenance are no more in evidence and the individual is restored. Still there hangs over him a responsibility for whatever measure of wilfulness is connected with the misdeed. And the Lord will see to it that he receives the necessary stripes. We are not to think of this as vindictive, but rather as a measure of justice, that thus is learned something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, its undesirability, and that good always brings its reward.

In harmony with this thought there are Christians today who have come into full harmony with the Lord Jesus and every blessing of fellowship with God's children, who are, nevertheless, suffering physically the penalty for indiscretion, sins of their earlier life. The sin has been forgiven in the sense that it is not held against them so as to bar their fellowship with the Lord. It is covered, but it has left its mark upon their flesh and causes them distress in various ways. Indeed, a general blight is upon the whole human family, which is covered in some respect to those who have accepted Christ. The scars and weaknesses of the present persist in our mortal flesh, and we have no hope even to get rid of these. They belong, however, to the mortal, which having been reckonedly justified through faith in Christ and consecration to God's service, will not be gotten rid of until the "change" in the First Resurrection, when we shall be granted new bodies. Then the sins which are now covered or hidden in the Lord's sight will be absolutely effaced, and we shall know them no more. This seems to be the Apostle Peter's thought when he says, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Act 3:19.) In a word, our sins may be covered, but, at the second coming of our Lord, they will be blotted out completely and forever.

When Thou Mayest Be Found

Thinking of the Lord's favor to himself, the Prophet by inspiration sets forth a principle applicable to all of the Lord's—to all people at all times, saying, For this [cause—because of God's mercy], everyone that is godly may pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely, when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach unto him. In other words, there is a time limit to divine mercies. The Lord will not always chide, neither will he keep (restrain) his anger forever. There came a limit to his merciful dealing with natural Israel. When that point had been reached a separation took place between those who were Israelites (the wheat) and the remainder (the chaff). The former were received into the Gospel dispensation, the others being scattered in the destruction of Israel's national polity in A.D. 70.

Similarly in dealing with the Gospel Church, a reasonable period seems to be allowed to each individual to make his calling and election sure, who, if he fails to do so, may drop into the Great Company, but whose only hope of attaining this place is through fiery trials in which, if still unfaithful, the end will be destruction in the Second Death. . . . Similarly during the Millennial Age, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth and every member of the race shall be privileged to see the "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," everyone will be obliged to make a start in righteousness by obedience to God's laws; and those who refuse will, as the Prophet says, die the Second Death: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old, and the sinner an hundred years old shall be accursed."—Isa. 65:20.

David seems to speak prophetically for those in the end of the Gospel Age, saying, "Thou art my hiding place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble: thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance." As the faithful were delivered in the great trouble that came upon the Jewish nation, so the faithful will be delivered from the great trouble impending upon Christendom. This does not necessarily imply that they will be taken away before the trouble. It is "Through much tribulation we shall enter the Kingdom." As of old the three Hebrews who were cast into the fiery furnace were uninjured, while those who threw them in were slain by the heat, smitten to death, so in the coming trouble the Lord's faithful will not be injured by the fiery trials through which they will pass.

Guided By God's Eye

The last four verses of our lesson represent our Lord as speaking to his people, "Ye righteous." In view of the context this is not to be understood to represent any absolutely faultless. "There is none righteous; no, not one." The righteous here addressed are such as the Lord reckons righteous, because of their heart attitude of faith and desire to be obedient to his will. To these he says, "I will instruct them and teach them in the way in which they shall go; I will guide them with mine eye."

This may be understood to signify that the Lord's eye will watch over us that he may give us the necessary, proper counsel. Another way in which it may be viewed, is represented by an exhibition which some of us have seen of a horse driven without reins or bridle, simply directed by the eye and watching for the master's will, the animal being without restraint. But this is true of only those who have had exceptional training. A horse and a mule, as the next verse tells us, are without understanding and require bit and bridle to make them serve us properly. We are exhorted not to be driven in this manner, because such is not acceptable to the Lord. "He seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth."

Those of God's children who fail to learn this lesson will never constitute the members of the Elect class, will not be "fit for the Kingdom of heaven." True, the Lord will deal with the world in general along these lines during the Millennium. With bit and bridle they will be restrained. Nevertheless, even the restitution class must advance beyond this place else they will never be fit for eternal life at the close of the Millennial Age. Whoever sees the principle here involved, that if he has any hope or desire for joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom, must learn the lesson of serving the Father and his cause of righteousness gladly, willingly; must be guided by his eye; must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Sorrows to the Wicked

"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Those who trust in the Lord, to all outward appearances, have as many sorrows as their less pious neighbors. Nevertheless God's promise is sure, his grace is sufficient for them. They may rest assured that "All things work together for good" to those who rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope, which maketh not ashamed those in whose hearts the love of God is shed abroad.

Be Glad in the Lord, and Rejoice and Shout for Joy, All Ye That Are Upright and Honest in Heart

We trust that all of our readers are coming to appreciate this blessed message more and more—to be glad in the Lord—a very different thing from being glad in the trifling things of this world. He whose affections are set upon this earth will continually find tribulations which hinder his rejoicing. But he who has set his affections upon things above, on the Lord and the glorious things which he has promised us, may indeed rejoice, for our Lord changes not. "Not one of his good promises shall fail." Let all who are honest in hope, in intention, in endeavor, speak forth the Lord's praise and shout for joy, not merely that their unintentional imperfections according to the flesh are covered, but also in the thought that the reign of righteousness, the Millennial Kingdom, is now at hand, and that under its domination all the families of the earth shall be blessed. . . .

"'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities;
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God,
The spirit climbs and hath its eye unsealed."

—Z. '08: 327-331.

11

Strength-Development

The strong right arm is only strong
Because an active will
Has made it serve. But were that arm
Left idly hanging still,
'Twould lose the hoarded strength of years,
and lose more rapidly
Than it was gained, by Nature's law
Of inactivity.

'Tis true of souls. They gather strength
With every cross they bear,
With every humble sacrifice,
With every heartfelt prayer,
With every conflict bravely met,
And trial bravely borne;
With every throb of anguish felt
When tender ties are shorn.

The tears and toils of His dear ones
Are wisely, kindly, sent
By Him who knoweth what they need
For soul-development.
The path of idleness is one
By vagrant children trod.
They grow in grace most rapidly
Who labor most for God.—Z. '14:138.

"Contend for the Faith"

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude 3.

THE contention which the Scriptures reprobate is that of **selfishness**—contending for place, for power, for **our** friends, against **some one else's** friends, for our ideas against those of others. And the implication is given that those who are thus contentious will never enter into the Kingdom; for this contentious spirit indicates a wrong attitude or condition.

It is one thing, however, to be inveigled into something or to be overtaken in a fault, and quite another thing to **contend** along **selfish lines.** Amongst the Lord's people, even in the Apostles' day, there was a tendency at times to fight **each other** rather than to fight the Devil and the spirit of the world and the weaknesses within themselves. The organs of destructiveness and combativeness, which would serve a Christian soldier in good stead if directed against his own weaknesses and blemishes, are sadly out of place when, ignoring his own weaknesses he merely becomes contentious with the brethren—often over nothing or over questions whose importance he exaggerates, because of his contentious spirit. Such should remember the Scriptural statement that 'he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."—Prov. 16:32.

The Apostle Paul reprehends that misdirection of Christian energy which "bites and devours" one another and warns against it as tending to the **destruction of all that is spiritual** amongst the Lord's people. Not that the Apostle favored slackness as respects the important principles of Divine Revelation, for he showed always his determination to contend for righteousness; as one instance of this we recall his own words regarding his rebuke of one of the other Apostles, older in the Christian faith than himself—"I withstood him to the face, **because he was to be blamed."**

Commendable Contention

But while all of the Lord's people should be on guard against the spirit of contention, watching closely lest anything be done in a biting and devouring manner, instead of manifesting patience and long suffering, brotherly-kindness, love, yet they have enlisted as New Creatures, spirit-begotten, to walk after the Spirit, and they must continually recognize this fact and keep watch that they are always walking in line with the spirit of the Truth; and our text tells us of a contention which is not only proper, but necessary for all who are walking in this way. They are to "earnestly contend for the faith"—for the Word of God, for the promises which God has made, for the good things for which God has arranged.

The necessity for this course lies in the fact that this world is no friend to grace; no friend, therefore, to the people of God. Selfishness, which is the spirit of the world, lies on the side opposite to the Holy Spirit of love and our own selfish interests are in line with the world in general. Consequently, no one could properly contend for the faith with a selfish motive, for the faith once delivered unto the saints" would forbid such a motive and condemn it at once. One reason, undoubtedly, why the Lord has permitted His cause to be in disesteem and subject to the attacks of the world, and particularly of evil spirits in the world, is that He desires to have for His people in this "little flock" a tried people, a people of character. Character implies such fixity of purpose and intention that the individual would fight a "good fight" against every influence tending to lead away from the Lord's Word and the Lord's brethren.

The world and its theories are in opposition to the saints; therefore, we must contend against the selfish human and devilish arrangements which prevail at the present time. It is possible for one to be contentious in religious matters, and to "earnestly contend," and yet such a course be not contending "for the faith once delivered to the saints." One might be contentious for some pet theory of his own rather than for those principles of righteousness which the Bible inculcates.

Sometimes it might seem like contention for the faith once delivered to the saints for one person to argue with another on Scriptural subjects, and yet his real motive in so doing might be pride. Pride is a part of selfishness; therefore in contending for his own ideas one might be cultivating pride. The contention which God would approve is that earnest desire to have whatever God's Word teaches. We must not contend with the tongue improperly, nor speak slanderously. In all of our contentions we should manifest the fruits of the Holy Spirit—gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love. Thus the proper contention would not partake of anger, hatred, malice or strife.—Z. '12:215.

The Unjust Steward

Luke 16:1-13.

"He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous in much."—V. 10.

BECAUSE the Pharisees were the leading exponents of the Law, Jesus pointed many of His parables against them, while He comparatively ignored the irreligious Jews—the Sadducees, who made no profession of faith. Today's lesson is in line with this. This parable was spoken as a rebuke to the spirit of the Pharisees, who bound heavy burdens upon others, but shirked them themselves, while pretending hearty obedience to the Law.

In olden times, more than now, it was the custom for rich men to appoint stewards. Such a steward had as absolute control of his master's goods as had the master himself; he had, as it were, the power of attorney. Some stewards were faithful; others extravagant. The one mentioned in our Lord's parable was extravagant, unsatisfactory. His master had concluded to dispense with his services, and had asked him to render up his accounts.

On his books were the accounts of certain debtors who apparently were left with no chance of being able to meet their obligations. The steward concluded that he would scale off these debts, so that the debtors probably could pay before he turned over his office to his successor. He did so. One owing a hundred bath of oil was told that he might scale off the debt to fifty. Another owing a hundred measures of wheat (500 to 1400 bushels) was told that he might scale it down twenty per cent. And so he went down the list. Such a use of his authority made him friends amongst those whom he had favored; and his lord complimented him upon the wisdom he had displayed.

Applying this parable, Jesus proportionately condemned the Pharisees for taking an opposite course. He had declared that the Scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat as interpreters of the Mosaic Law, and that, had they followed the course of this steward, they would have made friends of the poor publicans and sinners by trying to minimize their shortcomings, and to encourage them to do the best they could to comply with the demands of the Law. Instead, they bound heavy burdens upon the people and discouraged them.

All this on their part was hypocrisy; for they could not help knowing that they themselves were unable to comply with the requirements of the Law, which is the full measure of a perfect man's ability. Their proper attitude would have been to confess their own shortcomings, to strive to do their best, to appeal to God for mercy and to teach the common people to do similarly. So doing, they would have been better prepared to be received into the Gospel favor in the end of their Age. As it was, by their hypocrisies they were hindering themselves from becoming disciples of Jesus and from seeking grace and forgiveness of sins. They were also hindering others from becoming disciples by claiming that it was possible to have God's favor through keeping the Law.

Applying the Parable

Jesus then said to His disciples, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail—at the end of your stewardship, at death—the results of your benevolence may cause that ye be received in the resurrection, into the everlasting habitations.—Verse 9, paraphrase.

There is room for dispute in respect to the teachings of this parable, but to us it seems clear that Jesus meant that the wisdom of the unjust steward should be exercised by His disciples in their dealing with the mammon, the riches, of the present life. From the moment God's people give themselves to Him, they give also their earthly rights and interests, and become merely stewards of their time, talent, influence, wealth, etc. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God." Use all that you have energetically in the Divine service.

These stewards of the mercies of God have His approval in the use of all of earthly things to the forwarding of their spiritual interests; they will not be counted unjust squanderers, as they use their earthly opportunities for advancing their Heavenly interests. On the contrary, this will be reckoned to them for wise stewardship; and being found faithful in the use of earthly things in God's service, they can safely be entrusted with the greater things of the future. They will be received into the everlasting habitations and be granted a share with Messiah in His glorious Kingdom. They will be entrusted with all of God's favors to be bestowed upon mankind. Their unselfishness in the present time, their willingness to sacrifice, will be the basis of the Divine approval and glory to follow.

Unfaithfulness in the present time respecting things of trifling value in comparison would mean unfaithfulness in the future great things. Whoever therefore selfishly appropriates to himself the things of which he is steward will not be trusted with the future great things; and whoever is sacrificing will thus demonstrate his faithfulness, his loyalty to God, and to such the greater things will be entrusted. Would God entrust the riches of the future life and glory and honor to any who now prove themselves unfaithful, selfish, covetous, using present blessings merely for self-gratification? Surely not!

Jesus asks, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own?" With the followers of Jesus all things of the present time are God's—the things of the present life belong to God, because we have consecrated or devoted them. The things of the future life belong to us, because God has promised them to us. But there are conditions; namely, our faithfulness, our loyalty. If we are not faithful in handling the things which we have devoted to God, He will not give to us by and by those things which He has promised shall be ours conditionally. If, then, we should misappropriate the things consecrated to God—if we should abuse our stewardship and use those opportunities selfishly, could we expect God to give us the things which He has promised to give only to the faithful?

Serving Two Masters

There are two great impelling powers; one evil, the other good. These are known by different names and are in every way opposite. God is the Good Master; Satan is the evil master; but each has representatives and various interests. Thus God, His Spirit and His teachings, are represented by the word Love; while Satan and his course are represented by selfishness, covetousness, mammon. Through the fall of man the whole world has lost the Spirit of God, and has been under the domination of Satan for centuries. All have become more or less evil. The spirit of selfishness, covetousness, leading on to unrighteousness in general, has gotten hold upon our race, so that even after we see the wrong course it is with great difficulty that its power over us can be broken. "We cannot do the things which we would."

But here comes in the proposition of the Gospel: God desires some faithful souls to be associated with Jesus in dispensing His blessings. . . . Whoever intelligently accepts the Gospel call turns his back upon sin, selfishness and all the works of the flesh and the Devil related thereto, and sets his face Godward, loveward, rightward.

But it is not sufficient that he shall enter into a covenant to give up the world and walk in the footsteps of Jesus. It is not sufficient that God accepts that covenant. More than this is needed. He must demonstrate not only that he prefers right to wrong on equal terms, but that he is willing to suffer the loss of all things that he may be on the side of right, on God's side.

Then comes in the trial and testing. He seeks to serve God and to gain the reward of glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom with Jesus; but he finds a tendency in his flesh to look after and appreciate the rewards of mammon, selfishness. This brings about the great battle. One or the other must conquer. In addition to growing in grace, in knowledge and in love, the New Creature in Christ must feed upon the Divine encouragements and promises of the Bible. Otherwise he will be discouraged and utterly give up the fight against the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The Lord has promised grace sufficient in every time of need, to the faithful. He tells us that He knoweth that we are dust; He remembereth our frame, that we cannot do what we would like to do. But at the same time He requires that we do all that we are able to do, assuring us that for all such His Grace will be sufficient; that is to say, to all such He will make up the deficiency.

In our lesson Jesus forewarns us that the choice we make must be a permanent one, that the supposition that we can serve God and mammon at the same time is a mistake. In proportion as we are faithful to one, we are unfaithful to the other. It is therefore for us to choose the service of God, counting it the greatest of our privileges, and its rewards the greatest of all rewards, and these for eternity.

After all, much will depend upon the degree of our faith. If we have faith in God, in His promise of great reward, if we have faith in the promise of the Savior to give us His grace and assistance in every time of need, it will be quite possible for us to gain the crown which the Lord hath in reservation for all those who love Him supremely.—Z. '14:108, 109.

"Like Unto the Angels"

AMONGST the Jews were three particular parties. The largest and in every way most important of these were known as Pharisees, who believed in a future life, to be attained by a resurrection at some future time, for which they waited. Second to these in importance, yet very much smaller, were the Sadducees, who boasted of their intellectual acumen, claiming that a man when he died had no pre-eminence above a brute, except in the honors done to his corpse—disbelieving in a resurrection or future life of any kind, disbelieving also that there are angelic beings of a spirit order, holding extremely materialistic views, believing nothing that they could not appreciate with their natural senses. The third party, Essenes, accepted the heathen teachings of Plato, disbelieving in a resurrection, and claiming that when a man died he was more alive than before. This sect or party, although mentioned by Josephus a little later than our Lord's time, was so small in the days of our Lord and the apostles that they are not so much as mentioned once in the New Testament.

The Pharisees, the numerous party, the orthodox at that time, were our Lord's chief opponents in argument and otherwise; yet, as the records show, they uniformly failed to entrap him, though their ablest men were put to the fore with this end in view—that they might show our Lord's teachings to be illogical or unreasonable to some degree, and thus to break his influence with the common people; or, failing to do this, that they might catch him in his words and have opportunity for a charge against him before the Roman governor, and thus bring political pressure to bear to stop his ministry. It was on such an occasion, after the discomfiture of the Pharisees, that the Sadducees stepped to the front with a question which they had every confidence would confuse our Lord in the presence of the people, and not only show his position to be illogical, but gain a feather for their own caps as philosophers and teachers superior, not only to Jesus, but also to the Pharisees.

Whose Wife Shall She Be?

The Jewish Law provided certain inheritances for each son, and it was the ambition of each to perpetuate his own family. This the Law inculcated, by providing that upon the death of any man childless, his brother, if he had one, should perpetuate his inheritance for him by taking the widow to wife. The skilfully arranged question of the Sadducees supposed seven brothers, the first one of whom married and died childless, the wife being taken by his brother, and so likewise until the entire seven had been husbands to the one wife. Lastly the wife died. Which of these seven could claim the wife in the resurrection? The question seemed to show an absurdity in the doctrine of a future life, implying that there would be such a muddle that all eternity would not straighten it out.

Our Lord's answer was, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God." That is to say, the difficulty of the Sadducees arose from the fact that they had not understood the Scriptures relating to the future life beyond the resurrection, neither did they give proper weight to the power of God, which is quite able to surmount every difficulty that could be imagined. Our Lord might have stopped there, giving the not unreasonable inference that his hearers lacked the proper knowledge of the subject to permit them to clearly comprehend anything he might say about it. But rather than appear to avoid the question, and, indeed, with a view to giving light upon the subject to us who would come afterward, our Lord explained the matter, saying, "The children [people] of this world [age] marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age] and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage."

True the glorified Church will not marry, but there is no reference here to the Church class, the Bride class. The question did not refer to saints, but to any ordinary Jews under the Law, to whom the illustration might be in any degree applicable. . . .

Did the Ransom Secure Full Resurrection?

We ask then, what did our Lord mean by limiting his answer to "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection"? Will not the whole world be accounted worthy to obtain full resurrection? Did not our Lord's death purchase full resurrection for all the race? We answer, No. Our Lord's death was the propitiation, the satisfaction, whereby the sins of the whole world shall be cancelled, and whereby, therefore, the whole world may be awakened from the sleep of death and brought out of the great prison-house, the tomb. But such awakening and coming forth is with a view to their enlightenment, that they may all come to the knowledge of the Truth to the intent that by such knowledge and by obedience to it they might be saved, recovered, delivered completely out of all weaknesses and imperfections —brought gradually step by step, up, up, up, out of sin and death-conditions to full perfection and life-conditions; and this condition of absolute perfection or life from the dead is resurrection "out from among the dead" who will refuse to use those opportunities.

The raising up will proceed during the thousand years from the time of the awakening of the individual until he shall have attained to the full perfection of manhood—all that was lost in Adam. Then he will be resurrected—that will constitute his resurrection. Thus he will attain unto "that world," that perfect dispensation which God has designed shall be the ultimate and everlasting condition of all who love and obey him. But some will be awakened from the tomb who will not be accounted worthy to attain such a lifting up to perfection, mental, moral and physical, because of their failure to respond to the blessed privileges and influences of that time.

Now, as respects those who, at the close of the Millennial age, will have demonstrated their obedience to the Lord, and who shall be accounted worthy of that perfect state, and to be made perfect themselves, lifted clear out of death—such will neither marry nor be given in marriage. The Lord does not say what will be the intermediate conditions during the Millennial age, and this leaves us to infer that mankind and womankind, being awakened from the tomb in precisely the same conditions in which they went into it, will possess the same sex distinctions as at the present time. What will be the regulations of that time we are not told, but we have confidence in the Lord that he will be abundantly able to direct the course of mankind wisely for their benefit, instruction and uplift.

The end of the uplifting process, the end of the Millennial age, will mark a change in the human constitution by gradual development, a change so great that by that time those who will be ready to pass beyond the Millennial age into the everlasting conditions will not only be perfect in the sense and degree that Adam was perfect before he sinned, but also before mother Eve was taken from him and made a separate being. That is to say, sex conditions will gradually pass away, and be no more in mankind, even as it is not found in angels, and as it was not in man before the separation into sexes was effected in Eden for the purpose of propagating the race and filling the earth.

Sexual Distinctions Temporary

It will be remembered that during the first thousand years after the fall, not only was life much longer than at present, but births were much less frequent than now; and so we presume that during the Millennial age the propagation of the species will gradually diminish until toward its close it will finally stop, mankind gradually losing the sex functions. Sex will no longer be necessary; for man will no longer be alone, as he was at first, to need a companion, for the whole earth will then be filled with perfect beings, and all the wicked, the incorrigible, will be destroyed. It is to this we understand that our Lord referred, saying, "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being children of the resurrection." As the angels do not die, neither will the perfected human beings die.

Eternal life is the gift of God through Christ for all of Adam's race who would receive it upon conditions of absolute obedience, and the test which will take place in the close of the Millennial age

(Rev. 20:7-9) will guarantee that none remain to pass beyond into the perfect dispensation except those who, like the angels, having been tested, will be in no danger of falling, and will therefore die no more. Those who pass that inspection . . . will become God's children by the resurrection—by the raising up processes of the Millennial age, administered through the glorified Christ—the same that elsewhere is called "the resurrection by judgments," because the rewards and penalties of obedience or disobedience will follow promptly, having the effect of constraining to righteousness and uplifting from sin-and-death conditions.

In applying this Scripture thus to the world of mankind, and its raising out of death conditions during the Millennium and its attainment to life everlasting and to the condition where there will be no further marrying, we have no desire to imply that there will be marrying in the glorified Church. On the contrary, the Church is married to the Lord. As old creatures they are dead; as New Creatures they never will be married to any but the Lord; and when in the resurrection they come forth to glory, honor and immortality it will be to conditions like to their Lord, "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named."

What Moses Showed at the Bush

Continuing to level his argument against the Sadducees—continuing to prove the general resurrection of mankind, and not merely the resurrection of the Church—our Lord adds, "Now that the dead are [to be] raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, for he is not a God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto him." Had there been no provision in God's plan for the raising of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he never would have spoken of himself as being their God, but rather would have treated them as non-existent, having no being, no God, and never to have any. Likewise the fact that God speaks of the coming blessing through Abraham upon all the families of the earth proves that from the divine standpoint, although the billions of earth are dead, they all live unto God—in his purpose, in his plan, in his arrangement, to be accomplished and fulfilled through Jesus during the Millennial age.

Shall We Know Each Other There?

The questions are frequently asked us, What knowledge of one another will there be in the next life? and Will there be communication between the heavenly and the earthly classes?

We reply that the acquaintance of the present time will be prolonged into the next life, and revive and increase. As for those who will attain the spirit plane of being, viz., the Bride, the overcoming class, and "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," otherwise in Scripture known as the "great company," all being upon the spirit plane will be able to see and know each other, because in those respects they will be alike, spirit beings. True, the Bride class, with her Lord Jesus and the Father, will all be on the divine plane, while the Great Company, like the angels, will be on a lower plane of spirit being. But all spirit beings may see and know and have intercourse with each other —those on the divine plane being superior not only in rank and position but also in that they will possess inherent life, immortality, while the others will possess a life that will be eternal because of its continuous supply.

The world of mankind will know each other as they do now—some by previous acquaintance and some by introduction. Thus, none of the ancient worthies who will be present as perfect men will be known by any of the world today, and they would need, therefore, some kind of introduction, either by divine miracles attesting them and their authority or by some other means. It may be easily enough imagined how the world will gain introduction one to the other, just as such introductions are now accomplished amongst men. Similar introductions will doubtless be necessary to the glorified saints beyond the vail, since the majority of them have never seen the Lord, the Apostles, nor each other.

Communications Between Spirits and Humans

Coming now to the last feature, we answer that undoubtedly there will be communication between the heavenly and the earthly beings, not only throughout the Millennial age but subsequently. To our understanding the Father and the heavenly angels will have nothing to do with mankind during the Millennium, until the delivery up of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. But there will be communication between the Kingdom class, the Church, with Jesus at its head, and the world of mankind under their supervision and uplifting influences. Looking back into the past, we see that God communicated with Abraham, and numerous of his natural descendants, through spirit beings, who assumed human form for the purpose. But we are not to expect such manifestations in the future, because we find in the divine arrangement a different preparation.

We find that the ancient worthies as a class have been prepared of God in advance to serve this very purpose; that they, rewarded with human perfection, might serve as the intermediaries between the spirit Kingdom and the world of mankind. As it is written, "The Law shall go forth from Mount Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The instruction will go from the spiritual Kingdom to the earthly princes, its representatives, and be communicated from these princes to all the families of the earth, with full power and authority in the name of the Kingdom to enforce every regulation, to reward the well-doers and to punish all who fail of obedience.

With the end of the Millennial age, wilful evil-doers having been cut off in the Second Death, the world of mankind will be, like the angels, possessed of lasting life, and without sex. They will all be perfect men, like to and equal to the condition of the ancient worthies during the Millennium. When the Kingdom of Christ shall be delivered to the Father we believe that a similar communication will be established between the perfect men and the heavenly courts that was in vogue before the first disobedience and its penalty came upon men. True, we do not know very particularly about the character of the communion which prevailed in Edenic times, but it was sufficient for every purpose, we may be sure, and such will be the communion of the future between the perfect God and his earthly image, the perfect man—similar communion to that which during the Millennial age will take place between the glorified Church and its earthly representatives, the Worthies. — Z. '04:344-347.

7

The Feast of Tabernacles---A Convention

IN the Law it was commanded that from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the seventh month, the Israelites should dwell for a week in booths constructed of branches of trees, and keep that week as a special festival of thanksgiving to the Lord. It was a feast of ingathering or harvest home. Our Thanksgiving day to some extent resembles this. They were to live for a week in these booths to remind them of how once they had been a people without a home, when God delivered them out of Egypt and brought them on the way to Canaan. The yearly remembrance of this experience would tend to produce in their hearts thankfulness to God as the one who had given them the land of promise, the one upon whom they were dependent for their national existence and freedom from slavery, and the one who had promised to bring them to a full inheritance of all the glorious things contained in the great promise, the Oath-Bound Covenant made to Abraham, that ultimately through his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Our general three-day Conventions are somewhat after this Feast of Tabernacles pattern, only on a higher plane, adapted to us as Spiritual Israelites. . . . We do not live in tents and booths, yet our absence from our regular homes for a few days implies temporary dwelling-places or tabernacles. We are absent for a time from some of the conveniences and comforts of our homes, yet these conditions may be very favorable to us as reminders that here we have no continuing city, that we are not to set our hearts upon houses or lands or any earthly thing, but to remember that our citizenship is in heaven and that our present sojourn is toward the heavenly Jerusalem, the Kingdom, and that everything in the present time should be considered by us as a temporal or tabernacle condition, waiting for the eternal conditions which God has promised us.

For the entire seven days the Jews rejoiced and had a feast of good fellowship one with another, dwelling in these booths. The whole people, for a time at least, were on a common level. The booths were erected inside the city or outside the walls as might be convenient, and many of them were on the roofs of the houses, which there are usually flat. It was not an occasion for moral abandon, but, quite to the contrary, was a time for Bible study. The reading of the book of the Law and the expounding of it were the main centers of interest, and the people no longer wept and repined at the reading of it, but on the contrary, rejoicing that the Lord's favor was with them, they studied the Word with a view to practising it to the extent of their ability.

This also corresponds well with our Conventions, in which Bible study has the chief place and chief interest. Surely we do have spiritual refreshing, feasting; surely these gatherings, these spiritual feasts in temporary tabernacles away from our usual homes, are proving very helpful to the Lord's people. For this reason they grow more and more to be appreciated amongst those who put spiritual matters first.—Z. '05: 365, 366.

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The guidance and overruling of the anarchy will be under the control of the glorified Church—the Christ. Thus those days of anarchy will be shortened and not permitted to go on to their reasonable end—a general strife, "every man's hand against his brother"—which would in the end mean "no flesh saved." On the contrary, the glorified Christ will permit the trouble to go only so far as to teach the world a great lesson: that its rule of selfishness means in the end destruction—to be devoured one of another.—Z. '04: 230.

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Perfection is not a thing of the past, but of the future. We cannot be satisfied with the past, but we "shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness," sharers in the glorious first resurrection. For this we are pressing along, forgetting the things that are behind.

We forget the things that are behind, because it is right that we should do so. Because God forgets them, and declares that he has cast all of our imperfections behind his back; that our imperfections are all covered from his sight, by the merit of him who loved us and who died for us, and whom we love, and in whom we are trusting, and in whose steps we are seeking to walk with more or less of imperfection according to the defects we have inherited in the flesh. We are not meaning to suggest that slips or failures should be lightly esteemed or quickly forgotten; they should be rectified to the extent of our ability, and Divine forgiveness should be sought for these defects daily. —Z. '04: 23.

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WHAT IS MAN

Psa. 8: 3-9.

As one upon the deep looks out upon the vast expanse of water and the riding of the vessel upon it, he thinks, How little **is** man! How small a speck in the Universe! When we look up into the heavens and realize that they represent **so much more** of Divine power, we are still more surprised. When we **consider** the heavens, and realize that all these stars, except the planets which belong to our own system, **are really suns,** and that around each of these suns revolve planets, as our earth revolves around our **sun,** and when we think of the number of these suns and their planets, we are **amazed,** and we feel our own littleness all the more.

We ask astronomers as to the **number** of these suns, and they tell us that there are a hundred millions of them in sight. And if we would average the planets around these hundred million suns at ten, it would be ten hundred millions of planets. And then they tell us, further, that if we could take our stand upon the very farthermost one of these we would see still beyond us as many more, and as many more.

Our minds are appalled as we begin to think of the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and then consider **man,** how small a work in God's sight! We have an appreciation then of what the Scriptures say man is like in God's sight—as "the dust in the balance," that is not worthy to be taken into account. We have all been in the grocer's shop and noticed that he pays no attention to the dust in the scoop of his scale. So man is so small in the sight of the great Creator that we wonder that God should have any interest at all in humanity.

Except for the Bible we should have no knowledge of God's interest in us, and we might think that God is so great that He would pay no heed to us. But, when God reveals Himself to us in the Bible, we begin to see that there is not only Divine power exercised and manifested in the creation of all these worlds, but we see also this Divine power manifested in God's dealings with us, and also the **love** of God, which the Scriptures state "passeth all understanding." What wonderful condescension on the part of the Creator that He should give heed to us!—Z. '12: 59.

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The light now shining is **not** for the unfaithful, but for the faithful servants; and no matter how clearly the unfaithful may have seen and understood the deep things of God, and no matter how he may have enjoyed them, if he has not loved them so as to serve them and sacrifice his conveniences for them, he is unworthy of them and **must** go out into the outer darkness of the world in general. . . . Let us, then, dearly beloved, have for our watchword, the word **devotion.**—Z. '91: 9, 10.

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J Kraloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 109

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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The Feast of Tabernacles

John 7: 37-46.

Golden Text:—"Never man spake like this man."

THE two great feasts of the Jews were the Feast of Passover, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the first month, and the Feast of Tabernacles (dwelling in booths), from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of Tishri, the seventh month, corresponding closely to October 1, but varying according to the Jewish calendar, which was calculated on lunar time. These two great feasts divided the Jewish year, and were the great occasions on which the people from all over the Kingdom were expected to visit Jerusalem, the capital city, to spend a week in fellowship together, in thanksgiving to the Lord and the making of vows to him. These two festivals represent the beginning of a year—the one the civil year, the other the Church year, yet both might be termed religious in the sense that the entire national government was built upon a religious foundation. Israel was God's nation, and its laws were from him.

Each of these feasts had its peculiar religious sacrifice, pointing to our Lord and his sacrifice and the Gospel Church, his body. The Passover festival in the beginning of the year was the anniversary of the deliverance from Egypt, the Passover lamb representing Christ, our Passover sacrifice, and the feast following representing the liberty and joy and blessing which come to all of the Lord's people passed over through faith in his blood. The fall festival was held in connection with the Day of Atonement and its sacrifices for sins, which typified the better sacrifices of this Gospel age and the ultimate atonement for the sins of the whole world, and the consequent ultimate removal of the curse which still rests upon the world of mankind. This festival was instituted at the time Israel passed from the wilderness into the Land of Promise. It commemorated the wilderness life and the entrance into Canaan, where they were privileged to enjoy their inheritance and have more substantial dwelling places. It was really the festival of the New Year, and a kind of thanksgiving occasion for the ingathering or harvest of the year.—Exod. 23: 16; Lev. 23: 33-44.

The Feast of Tabernacles Celebration

The usage of the people on this occasion is thus described by Edersheim and others:—

"In Jerusalem booths were erected everywhere, in court and on housetop, in street and in square. These arbors or booths were made of branches of trees—palms, sycamores, olives, pines, willows, etc. Nobody was living at home, everybody in these booths—all the people from the city and crowds from the country. All distinctions of rank, all separation between rich and poor, were for a while forgotten, as each one dwelt in as good a dwelling as his neighbor.

"Each morning a joyous procession, with music, went down to the Pool of Siloam and drew water in a golden pitcher, from which it was poured out upon the altar amid hallelujahs.

"At night, four golden candelabra, each with four golden bowls for light, were in the center of the court, and the light emanating from them was visible to the whole city. Around these lights pious men danced before the people with lighted flambeaux in their hands, singing hymns and songs of praise, whilst the Levites, who were stationed on the fifteen steps which led into the woman's court of the Temple and which corresponded to the fifteen psalms of degrees, i.e., steps (Psalms 120-134), accompanied the songs with instrumental music.

"The Temple illumination was symbolical of the light which was to shine from out the Temple into the dark night of heathendom; then, at the first dawn of morn the blasts of the priests' silver trumpets, of the army of God, as it advanced with festive trumpet-sound and call, to awaken the sleepers and to utter solemn protest against heathendom."

"It is supposed that on the last evening of the festival, when the splendid light of this grand illumination was to cease, Christ called attention to himself, 'I am the Light of the world' (John 8: 12), which is to shine forever and illuminate not only the Temple and the Holy City, but all the world,"—the Sun of Righteousness.

"That Great Day of the Feast."

The last of these seven days of the feast was called the Great Day. It was in it that the entire festival ceremony and rejoicing reached its climax. Again we glean from Edersheim and others, as follows:—

"According to Jewish tradition the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night, symbolical of God's presence and guidance, at first appeared to Israel on the fifteenth of Tishri, the first day of the feast. On that day Moses was said to have come down from the Mount and announced to the people that the tabernacle of God was to be reared among them. We note that the dedication of Solomon's Temple and the descent of the Shekinah glory upon it took place at this feast.—1 Kings 8; 2 Chron. 7.

"The last great day of the feast was the climax of all this symbolization. Early in the morning the people, with the Paradise apple (an orange) in their left hands and branches in their right, marched to the sound of music in a procession headed by the priest, who bore a golden pitcher to draw water from the Pool of Siloam, south of the Temple. The priest having filled the golden pitcher at this fountain, brought it back into the court of the Temple, amid the shouts of the multitude and the sounds of cymbals and trumpets. The return was so timed that the procession should arrive just as other priests were laying the pieces of the sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering toward the close of the ordinary sacrifice-service.

"On each of the seven days the priest made a circuit of the altar, saying, 'O, then, now work salvation, Jah! O, Jah, give prosperity!' But on the seventh day they made the circuit seven times remembering how the walls of Jericho had fallen in similar circumstances, and anticipating that by the direct interposition of God, the walls of heathendom would fall before Jehovah and the world lie open before his people to go in and possess it.

"The golden pitcher full of water was then poured upon the altar. This ceremony was considered of vital importance and apparently symbolized the out-pouring of the holy Spirit. Immediately following the pouring of this water the Hallel was sung. This consists of Psalms 113-118. These were chanted, with responses, to the accompaniment of the flute. As the Levites intoned the first line of the Psalm, the people repeated it; while to each of the other lines they responded, Hallelu Yah (Praise ye the Lord). Then the priests blew a three-fold blast on their silver trumpets."

Jesus at the Feast

Our lesson relates to the last feast of Tabernacles attended by our Lord—the one which occurred just six months before the crucifixion. . . .

On the occasion of this feast, many wondered whether or not Jesus would attend it, for it seems to have been well understood by a considerable number that the chief priests were so envious against the Lord, so enmitous, so bitter, that threats had been made against his life. While our Lord realized that his life was under divine protection until his "hour" should come, nevertheless it would appear that he did not tempt providence by going unnecessarily in the way of danger, but rather shaped his course according to the conditions he found. Thus, too, he admonished his disciples, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another."

The context shows that at this time some of our Lord's brethren (probably his cousins, for cousins at that time were called "brethren") seemed to doubt his Messiahship, and urged him to go up to Jerusalem and perform his mighty works there, where the most learned men of the nation would have an opportunity for seeing and criticising and fault-finding, and if possible refuting his claims and miracles. Our Lord's answer was, "Go ye up to the feast; I go not up to the feast; mine hour is not yet fully come." For our Lord to have gone up early to the feast might have provoked the animosity of the religious teachers the more. His delay in going was no injury to the publicity of his teachings either, because the people naturally inquired for him, expressed wonder, discussed his claims, told one another what they had seen and heard in their own cities, villages, etc. It was toward the latter part of the feast week that our Lord arrived on the scene and went straightway to the Temple, and when the religious sentiments of the people were at their highest pitch he called their attention to the deep spiritual things symbolized by them year by year continually.

It is presumed that it was just at the close of the pouring of the golden pitcher full of water on the altar, a libation to the Lord, and while the multitudes in the warm climate were probably thirsty and had their thirst rather aggravated by the sight of the water, that Jesus made the announcements which constitute the essence of our lesson, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow a stream of living water."

No wonder the people said, as the Prophet had foretold, that our Lord spake in parables and dark sayings. How many, how few of the multitude who heard could gain any reasonable understanding of this message! Even under the blessed influences that are ours under the Spirit dispensation, how few have any adequate conception of what these words signify. . . .

The Apostle commented upon our Lord's words, explaining the first part, but not the second. He says, "This spake he of the Spirit which they who believed on him should receive." The receiving of the Spirit is the satisfying of our thirst. All through life we are drinking at this fountain. We will not be satisfied until we awake in the Lord's likeness; then, as the Apostle declares, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness"—when this mortal shall be swallowed up in immortality, we shall be like our dear Redeemer, see him as he is, and share his glory as members of his body. . . .

7

A Division Amongst the People.

Peace and unity are greatly to be desired; yet these are not always possible, not always advantageous. If all were perfect, peace and unity would certainly be the only proper condition, but so long as there are imperfections, errors, etc., there must be differences. In harmony with this our Lord declared that his message would not bring peace but a sword under present conditions. He will be the Prince of Peace by and by, but not until peace shall be established upon a righteous basis. Before that time he will be the King who will reign in righteousness, and dash evil systems and things to pieces as potters' vessels, with a rod of iron.

There are those who say peace, peace, when there is no peace and when peace is not possible, and the Lord's people are not to be of these. This does not mean that the Lord's people are to be breeders of strife. On the contrary they are exhorted everywhere in the Scriptures to be peaceable and peacemakers; but with all efforts for peace, and their love of peace and their peacemaking qualities continually increasing, the message that our Lord gave them will breed disturbances. Why? We answer in the words of our Lord, because there is no fellowship between light and darkness, there can be no peace nor truce between the two; in proportion as the one obtains control, the other is excluded.

In harmony with this we find in this lesson that there was a division among the people because of him—some approving and some opposing. Thus it must be with us as we lift up the standard of righteousness: if we will let the light of truth shine out, those who love the truth will be more or less attracted by it in proportion as their hearts are sincere, truth loving. Those who love the error will become antagonistic in proportion to their lack of sincerity. If this was the case with our Lord, can we think that it would be possible for his disciples to find it otherwise? Surely not. We must have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Ours is the Gospel of peace, yet we will find our path of progress will be a difficult one and we will need all the protection the Lord has provided in his fore-statement of what we must expect, and his promises of blessing and glory to the overcomers.

Envy, Malice, Hatred, Murder.

While our Lord was in the Temple teaching, the Jewish rulers, aware of his presence, were conspiring for his life. A meeting of the Sanhedrin was called, and officers representing the body were present in the Temple amongst the people, charged with the responsibility of finding some fault with the teaching and making it the pretext for a measure of insurrection, and further, the arrest of our Lord —under a charge either of teaching contrary to the Law of Moses or contrary to the Roman laws. On every occasion they sought to entrap him in his words, but being unable to do so, they returned to the Sanhedrin to report.

What a sad commentary it is upon the deceitfulness of the human heart, that these men, who were thus seeking for the apprehension and death of Jesus, were the most influential men in this, the holiest nation of earth. Not only so, they were Doctors of the Law — men supposedly the best versed in the Mosaic Law, its letter and spirit— men whose position in Judaism corresponded to that of Doctors of Divinity in Christendom to-day. We may well ask, as Pilate subsequently did, "Why, what evil hath he done?" The answer must be that there was no evil except in the hearts of these most talented, educated and nominally most religious men in the world. . . .

How dangerous a thing is envy—selfishness! How many are afflicted by it so that they refuse to recognize the Spirit of the Lord, so that instead of seeking to encourage one another and to add to the influence of one another and to realize that the whole work of the Lord is one, alas, how often is the spirit of strife and vain glory found! How displeasing everything of this kind must be in the sight of the Lord!

Grace Was Poured Upon His Lips

When the officers returned to the Sanhedrin, the question was asked, Where is your prisoner? Why did you not bring him? Were you not able to entrap him in his words? Is it possible that any man could speak in public and that keen-minded men such as you are would be unable to entrap him in anything he might say that would enable you to form a charge against him as a teacher of that which would be injurious to the people, that he said nothing that you could construe to be a violation of the Law of Moses or the law of the Romans? The answer was a volume in itself.— "Never man spake like this man."

The Lord's people, seeking to walk in his footsteps, continually find that the world is still full of envy and malice and hatred. They still find it true that "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not." . . . The Lord's message to these is, "In your patience possess ye your souls." Their proper course is to set a guard upon their lips that they sin not with their mouths, that they should not only pray but strive that the meditations of their hearts and words of their mouths be acceptable to the Lord, and in proportion as this is true of them it will also be true of them that they will be wiser and more discreet in their language than others—approximately like unto him who spake as never man spake.

But what a matter this is to guard the tongue! Truly the Apostle said that he who is able to conquer his tongue is able to conquer his whole body. It is so easy to say something that ought not to be said, it is so easy for the majority to repeat an evil rumor, to cast a reflection upon the character of another, to assassinate in this manner, or at least to wound or injure, the interests or feelings or good name of another. Let us more and more in this particular also seek to be like our Lord, seek to speak as other men do not speak, and thus show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. —Z. '05: 55-58.

From Glory to Glory

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."—2 Cor. 3:18.

A FULL transformation into a likeness of character to our heavenly Father should be the constant effort of every true child of God. It is not enough that we gain a knowledge of his plan and a pleasurable realization of his mercy and grace toward our unworthy race, . . . if we do not let our Heavenly Father's goodness and grace have its due effect upon our own hearts, our knowledge, and even our good works, will profit us but little.

Our main object, therefore, in studying God's Word and his character as therein revealed, should always be to bring our own hearts and minds into closer sympathy and likeness and co-operation with his. As the Apostle says (1 Thes. 4:3), "This is the will of God, even your sanctification"—our full setting apart, or consecration of mind and heart entirely to the Lord, that he may complete the good work of transforming us into his own glorious likeness, by the operations of his Spirit through his Word, and thus fit us for the enjoyment of his abounding grace in the ages to come.

In the above words of the Apostle we notice particularly that the statement is made of **all** the Church—**we all** are being changed from glory to glory. And the inference is consequently a strong one, that those who are not being so changed are not of the class addressed. This is a solemn thought, and one that claims the most careful consideration of all the consecrated. The question with us is not, Have we made a full consecration of ourselves to the Lord? but, having made such consecration, are we, in accordance with that consecration, fully submitting ourselves to the transforming influences of the Spirit of God to be changed daily more and more fully to the glorious likeness of our God?

Like the Apostle, then, addressing all the consecrated and faithful, we also of today may say, We all are being changed from glory to glory under the molding, fashioning influences of the Spirit of God. We can see it in each other, thank God! and we glory in it. Yesterday the mallet of divine providence struck a blow upon that member of the body of Christ, and an unsightly excrescence of pride fell off, and he looks so much more beautiful today, because he did not resist the blow, but gracefully submitted to it. The day before, we saw another under the wearing, painful, polishing process, to which he patiently submitted, and oh, how he shines today! And from day to day we see each other studiously contemplating the divine pattern and striving to copy it; and how we can note the softening, refining and beautifying effect upon all such! So the Spirit of God is at work upon all who fully submit themselves to his will.

But while the mallet and chisel and the polishing sand of divine providence do a very necessary part of the transforming work, by way of relieving us of many of the old and stubborn infirmities of the flesh, which cannot be so promptly and so fully eradicated by the gentler influences of the Spirit, the Apostle points us to the specially appointed means for our transformation in the careful and constant contemplation of the glory of God as revealed in his Word, and also in his blessed Ambassador, Jesus Christ, saying, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

"With open face" would signify without any intervening vail of prejudice or fear or superstition, but with simplicity of heart and mind. So we behold the glory (the glorious character) of the Lord—not with actual vision, but as in a glass, as reflected in the mirror of his Word and as exemplified also in his living Word, Jesus Christ. And to aid us in this study we are promised the blessed influences of the Spirit of the Lord, who will guide us into all truth and show us things to come.

As we look into the mirror what a glorious vision we have of the divine justice, which we promptly recognize as the very foundation of God's throne (Psa. 97:2), as well as the foundation of all our present and future security. If we could not recognize the justice of God we could have no assurance that his gracious promises would ever be fulfilled: for we would say, Perhaps he will change his mind. But, on the contrary, we can say, He changeth not, and whatsoever he saith shall surely come to pass. See with what inflexible justice the sentence upon our sinful race has been executed! Generation after generation, for over sixty centuries, has witnessed it: and no power in heaven or earth could revoke that sentence until the claims of justice had been fully met by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Justice, says the Word of God, must be maintained inviolate at any cost. And herein we read not only our rightful condemnation as a race of sinners, but also our final, complete and glorious deliverance, because **"God is just to forgive us our sins"** (1 John 1:9), since the precious blood of Christ redeemed us from the curse of death.

And while we thus read justice in the character of God, and mark with what scrupulous care he regards and respects this principle in all his dealings with his creatures, we see how he would have us respect the same principle in all our dealings. Thus we are led to consider what is the exact line of justice in this and that and the other transaction; and to remember also that this must be the underlying principle in all our conduct: or, in other words, that we must be just before we can be generous. This principle should, therefore, be very marked in the character of every Christian.

Next we mark the love and mercy of God. The death sentence upon our fallen race was a most merciful sentence. It was equivalent to saying: See, I have of my own free favor granted you life and all its blessings to be enjoyed forever on condition of its proper use; but now, since you have abused my favor, I take it away and you shall return to the dust from whence you came.

True, in the process of dying and of bringing forth a dying race to share the penalty, the mercy of God is not so manifest to the unthinking; but those who see the plan of God, discover in all this, not the decree of a merciless tyrant, but a merciful wisdom, but faintly disclosed in the promise that the seed of the woman shall in due time crush evil effectually—bruise the serpent's head—and deliver the entire race once generated in sin, by afterward regenerating all who will to life and all its blessed privileges. And in this mercy, in all its multiplied forms, we see the verification of the statement that "God is love." Thus we learn to be loving and merciful and kind both to the thankful and also to the unthankful.

We mark also our Heavenly Father's bountiful providence and his tender care for all his creatures; for even the sparrows are clothed and fed, and the unconscious lilies are arrayed in glory. Here we learn precious lessons of divine benevolence and grace. And thus, through all the catalogue of the moral and intellectual graces which go to make up a glorious character, we see in the mirror of the divine Word the model for our imitation; and in contemplation of all that is lovely, as embodied in him, and of all that is pure and holy and beautiful, we are changed little by little in the course of years to the same blessed likeness—from glory to glory. So be it: let the good work go on until every grace adorns the spotless robe of our imputed righteousness, received by faith in the blessed Son of God, whose earthly life was a perfect illustration of the Father's character, so that he could say—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Let us, therefore, mark well the love of Christ, the gentleness, the patience, the faithfulness, the zeal, the personal integrity and the self-sacrificing spirit. Mark well, then imitate his example and shine in his likeness.

The Apostle adds (2 Cor. 4:7) that the fact that we thus hold this treasure of a transformed mind in these defective earthen vessels proves the excellency of the power of God, and not of us. And so, by constant yielding to the influences of the Spirit of God, we may show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9.) Oh, let our efforts and prayers continually be that these poor earthen vessels may more and more show forth the praises of our God! Let them be clean in body and mind; let no evil communications proceed out of the mouth; and let no actions unworthy of the sons of God dishonor these living temples of the holy Spirit. True, on account of our deformities we may very imperfectly perform good works; but, by the grace of God, let us at least refrain from known evil.—Z. '05:328-330.

Making Friends With Mammon

Genesis 33:1-15.

7

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."—Ephesians 4:32. (R.V.)

THE Great Teacher admonished His followers, "Make unto yourselves friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness." In other words, His followers were not to be selfish and grudging, or to be exactors of the last dollar or shilling. They were to be generous in their dealings, and thereby secure the friendship of those who otherwise might hate them. In other words, the followers of Jesus were to have Heavenly ambitions instead of earthly ones, and they were to be willing to allow others to have the best of the bargain in earthly matters, if thereby they could forward their spiritual interests. This is well exemplified in today's lesson.

Giving All for God's Favor

Jacob willingly, gladly, gave up all of the earthly riches of Abraham and Isaac, and left all those in possession of Esau, claiming only that he should be the heir of the spiritual blessings—the great Promise made to Abraham, confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob himself. That Promise was not in respect to the present, but to the future; it was purely of faith. What cared Esau for a promise of the future? He desired what he got—the earthly inheritance. Nor do we find that after he got possession of the earthly inheritance, he ever gave a thought to the Covenant, which reads, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

But all the while, that Covenant was the one thing before the mind of Jacob. He would not contend with Esau for the earthly blessing, although it was included in the purchase which he had made. He would give Esau all of the earthly blessing, if he might inherit this great blessing of the future. All of Jacob's course in life was governed by this great Promise. . . .

Under the Lord's guidance, he had left his Uncle Laban's house, with the flocks and herds and servants which he had gradually accumulated there. Under Divine direction he was going back to the land of his father. Although twenty years had passed since he left home, he felt a timidity respecting his brother Esau, and prayed to the Lord upon the subject, reminding Him of the Promise, in which he trusted.

Then he sent word ahead to his brother that he was coming. Next he prepared a present—a gift of considerable value for those times—two hundred and twenty sheep, two hundred and twenty goats, sixty camels, fifty cattle, thirty asses, under the direction of servants. How large a proportion of his flocks and herds these were we know not, but they did represent long years of toil on Jacob's part. They were earthly things, however—things of the present time—and Jacob valued them as nothing in comparison to the great Promise which he possessed. He could give this goodly portion of earthly Mammon as a present to his brother Esau to purchase his favor, his good will. He was not under obligations to Esau; rather, Esau was indebted to him.

Jacob, the younger by a few minutes, had purchased of his elder twin brother all of the firstborn's portion, which included the major share of Isaac's worldly riches. Jacob had left all these in Esau's hands. The latter, naturally enough, might expect that Jacob was now coming to claim his riches—to take possession of the estate.

Esau was ready to fight for it, of course. Even if Jacob had protested that he laid no claim to the estate, Esau would continually have judged him according to his own standards, and would have mistrusted that at an opportune time Jacob would make an attack. Thus a rivalry between the two families would have been established—a feud. Such a feud would have interfered with Jacob's hopes in connection with the Abrahamic Promise. He must be a co-worker with God in the matter of establishing his seed, or posterity, numerous and influential, and qualified in due time to bless all the families of earth.

The Wisdom of Jacob's Course

Jacob not only offered the present to Esau, but insisted upon his accepting it. It would stand as a pledge of good faith between them. It would help to heal any old sores. Esau would be all the more willing to see the prosperity of his brother; for he realized that he had gotten the better of Jacob; first, by getting the patrimony, and secondly, by getting in addition so rich a present.

Evidently Jacob's course was the wise one. He still had plenty, and God could give him as many more sheep, goats, cattle, camels and asses as He pleased. His chief concern would be the promotion of everything appertaining to that great Abrahamic Promise, in which he delighted, the fulfilment of which lay beyond the present life.

The Lesson of Generosity

One lesson which we as Christians may draw from the course of experiences of Jacob is generosity toward the world—toward those who have no interest in the Heavenly Promise. We do not mean to institute a comparison between Jacob and ourselves, in the sense of holding him up as a pattern for Christian conduct. Quite to the contrary, we point out that while Jacob's faith was commendable and may be copied by us, his standing with God was different from ours. While he was an heir of that Abrahamic Promise and the Christian Church are also heirs of it, our inheritances are different.

We have already seen that the Abrahamic Promise is to have a double fulfilment. The earthly fulfilment is to come to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all of the faithful; while the higher, the Heavenly fulfilment, is to come to Christ and His spirit-begotten followers. . . .

Nevertheless, the general principle holds good with the Spiritual Heirs as with the natural heirs of that Promise—that faith in the Promise makes secondary everything else in life, hence, as Jacob was willing to set aside all other ambitions, aims, hopes and loves, wishing merely to see the accomplishment of this Abrahamic Promise and to surrender earthly rights and privileges in its favor, so should we, the Spiritual Heirs—yea, more so. We have much advantage every way. We can understand the Promise better than could they.

We see how God has already begun the preparation for the fulfilment of that Promise in the sending of His Son to redeem our race, and thus to make possible the blessing of all the families of the earth in due time. We see further that Jesus, having redeemed mankind, has been highly exalted, and now in power and great glory is merely waiting for the time to come when His Elect Spiritual Church will be completed. Then the Messianic Kingdom will be established; and then Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the faithful heirs of the earthly part of the inheritance will be awakened from the tomb, to enjoy their share in the grand work of world-blessing which God has promised.

As Jacob forsook his father's house, leaving all with his brother without contention, trusting only to the Heavenly Promise, so must we Spiritual Israelites forsake all earthly hopes and aims for joint-heirship with Christ in the Heavenly Kingdom. As Jacob was glad to give goodly presents to his brother for the sake of peace and prosperity and to assist in carrying out God's arrangement under this Promise, so should we as Christians be willing to give to our partners in life, our neighbors and friends and brethren, the larger share of earth's good things, if thereby we may forward the interests of the Lord's cause in connection with the Abrahamic Promise, in which we trust.

The world has the things of the present time. They are its prize. Mankind set their hearts upon these earthly things—they know nothing higher. We, on the contrary, appreciate the Heavenly things, esteeming, as the Apostle said, that all the things of earth are unworthy of comparison. We, like St. Paul, esteem the greatest things of an earthly kind but loss and dross that we may win Christ—that we may win a joint-heirship with Jesus in the great blessing of God by becoming members of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, and participating in the glorious work of this Promise—the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Galatians 3:29.

Set Your Affections Above

God had certain lessons of faith and obedience for the Ancient Worthies to learn. And how well they learned these! How much faith we see manifested in Abraham's career, and Isaac's and Jacob's, and all along down the line amongst those enumerated by St. Paul in Hebrews 11! How their obedience proved their loyalty as well as their faith!

We are not surprised that those noble characters are to have a goodly place in the work of blessing mankind under Messiah's Kingdom. Their experiences in life were a schooling, and training and preparation for what lies before them during Messiah's Kingdom. If they were faithful to God and trusted Him in the dark, and loyally sacrificed earthly interests, doing His will, how sure we may be that they will be no less loyal, no less faithful, no less obedient, when as perfect human beings under the favorable conditions of Messiah's Kingdom they shall be entrusted with honorable service and power by the great Messiah!

Who cannot see that if the Ancient Worthies of the House of Servants required testing as to obedience, faith, loyalty, much more the spirit-begotten members of the Christian Church require testing along these same lines! There are two reasons why our testing should be more thorough than theirs. (1) We are members of the House of Sons, while they were members of the House of Servants. We have not only the spirit of begetting as Sons of God, but additionally have much clearer light shining upon the Divine Revelation, making known to us God's will and showing us how His Plan is outworking. (2) Additionally, our testing is for a still higher position of glory and honor—"that we might become partakers of the Divine nature"; that we might be joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom on the Heavenly, or spiritual, plane, still more important than the earthly plane, which the Ancient Worthies will receive. As St. Peter says, "What manner of persons ought we to be"—we who have had such great favors and privileges and enlightenment!

If then Abraham left his father's house—kindred—to be a stranger in a strange land in obedience to the Lord's leading, will the Lord expect less of faith and obedience in His spirit-begotten children? Surely not! If Jacob surrendered up all of his rights to his father's property, should not the spirit-begotten children of God be willing to do as much, or more? If Jacob was willing to give liberally of his earthly possessions to secure peace with those who owed him much, ought not we, who have received the Holy Spirit, be willing to give still more generously of this world's Mammon, or riches, to those who love the present world, in order to secure our liberties and privileges? . . .

Finally Our Golden Text

Our Golden Text seems at first not very closely related to the lesson. Nevertheless there is a relationship. It is this: Whoever cultivates the spirit of generosity and benevolence toward others in the interest of the Lord's Cause will thereby be making character. Generosity in dealing with our enemies, with the world, will gradually make us more generous in all our dealings—in our homes, with our families, and especially in the Lord's family, to which our text refers.

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." We are not to forget that the Church is represented as being in the School of Christ, to be taught and prepared for Divine service, glory, honor in association with the great Redeemer during His Messianic Reign. We are not to forget that the lessons of this School are the graces of the Holy Spirit, and to whatever extent we attain these graces, to that extent we shall be prepared for the place in the Kingdom to which God has called us. To whatever extent God's people neglect the cultivation of these fruits of the Spirit, in that same proportion they will be unfit to share in Messiah's Kingdom.

Is not this the very essence of St. Peter's exhortation when he says, "Add to your faith, fortitude; to fortitude, knowledge; to knowledge, patience," etc. "If these things be in you in abounding measure, they shall make you to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord, and thus an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But he that cannot see these things is blind and cannot see afar off," and looks merely at the things of this present life, and will be unprepared for the . . . New Dispensation — now at hand.—2 Peter 1:5-11.—Z. '13:90-91.

Fervency of Spirit Necessary

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."—Romans 12:11.

THIS text might very properly be transposed to read: "In serving the Lord, be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit." The primary thought, the central thought, is that the Lord is to be served, and on this account we are to be careful to learn what kind of service is acceptable.

We ask first, Why should the great Creator of all things, the Upholder of all things, need our service? And the Bible answers us that God needs no service whatever, that He is quite competent to carry out His own Plan, but that He is pleased to have the co-operation, the sympathy, of His own servants—not only of the human family, but also of the spiritual family—that God is not making an exhibition of His own power, but that all of His intelligent creatures are permitted to become more or less participants in the one Plan of which He is the Center.

This is particularly true of the earth. God permitted the Adversary to overturn things, and has permitted sin to have its course, in order to illustrate certain great principles that operate in the universe, according to certain laws. Whoever violates the principles of righteousness will have proportionately an unsatisfactory experience, as sin is contaminating and contagious. And so what might appear as God's inability to control sin and its evil influences will ultimately be seen from a different standpoint—illustrating His Justice, Wisdom, Power and Love.

As some great business firm might say, Now we do not need any capital, but we will hold the balance of stock, and allow some to go out amongst the employees, so that each one may be associated in the business—have an interest in the business; just so God makes use of capital, having plenty otherwise Himself. God therefore arranged the Plan just as it is.

In God's Plan, the Logos was to have the first opportunity of becoming man's Savior and of bringing everything earthly to a condition of full perfection. God so arranged the matter that it would require a **death** to redeem mankind. God could have imposed a different penalty. He **could** have put a penalty of ten years of disfavor, or what not, for the first act of disobedience. But **He did not.** He put the penalty of **death.** And then He made the proposition to the great Logos that if He would carry out His Plan of being the Redemption-price for Adam and his race, which would cost Him His life, He would be granted still greater honors.

So the Logos left the glory that He had with the Father and humbled Himself to become a man and to die, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him." In this way our Lord Jesus was permitted to be a co-laborer with God. He was required to be faithful, zealous in spirit, fervent in spirit. And we read of Him, "The zeal of thine House hath consumed Me." He was to be self-sacrificing and not self-seeking.

The pictures of these things were given aforetime—before He came into the world. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so should the Son of Man be lifted up, etc. It required a great deal of fervency of spirit to carry our Lord through all the bitter experiences of His earthly existence. He needed to have a great deal of faith in the Father and a great deal of devotion to the Father. And the fact that He overcame the difficulties shows that He had the faith and the fervency.

Who Shall Be Able to Stand?

But our Heavenly Father's Plan is even broader than this. He planned that Jesus should have associates. And so the Apostle declares that God, who foreknew our Lord Jesus as the great Shepherd of the sheep, foreknew us also by Him—with Him. And if we partake of His sufferings in this present time, we shall also share with Him in the glories to follow. This was premeditated in God's Plan from before the foundation of the world.

This feature of the Plan began to operate at Pentecost. Those who had already believed in God as a Savior, and who had tendered their hearts to the Lord, could not be accepted until Jesus ascended up on High and made application of His merit for them—on behalf of all such. The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. Immediately they were privileged to begin a service for the Lord—a service that was made necessary in God's arrangement. He could have done without this service, but He did not—He arranged to have this very service. He purposed that a witness should be given to the world, to gather out a people for His name, and that those who should give the witness should show their faithfulness in the trials and tests that would come to them.

The Father is seeking such to serve Him as serve Him in spirit and in Truth. Therefore He allows the way to be made narrow by the opposition of the Adversary, the flesh and the world, so that none but those who are fervent in spirit will stand the tests. Others will not enter this work, or will fall out by the way. They will say that it is too hard. If you are God's servant they will say all manner of evil about you. They will say that you are a hypocrite, etc. God does not cause the Adversary to do this, but He permits it, not because He is limited in Power and could not cause it to cease, but because He is testing all who would be followers of Jesus. And He wishes to have no others in that Elect company than those who are fervent in spirit. Therefore are there such services and such tests.

The Cause of Opposition

The great business in life of those who would honor and serve the Lord is to serve the brethren and the Truth. Everything that represents the Truth these soldiers of the cross are to uphold—everything that is right, just, true. They will give their approval to such things and their disapproval to other things. This is what causes the opposition of the flesh and of the world and of the Adversary.

So, then, Christians have become dead to the world and alive toward God. Having thus been received and counted in as a member of Christ, every such one has as his special business the service of the Lord, the brethren and the Truth. And according to his abilities and opportunities is he to engage in this business. And this is to be his mind or disposition—to serve the Lord. And he is to be fervent in spirit, not indifferent, not lukewarm. As the Lord Jesus was fervent in spirit, even so are we to be. The fervency of His spirit for God and His arrangements consumed His life. So it must be with all those who serve God—those who walk in the Master's footsteps. This must be, necessarily, the chief business in life for these people of God.

How to Redeem the Time

It is necessary for us to engage in some kind of occupation in order to secure a livelihood. God has so arranged in order to prove our faithfulness. Further, as other people are engaged in these same occupations, laboring for the comforts of life, we are compelled to compete with these to some extent. But as we see that we have a nobler business, we shall see to it that all these secular things in life are cut off, as far as possible, in order that we may have the more time for the Lord's service. The old ambition to gain earthly things would lead us to lay up treasures on earth. But the hope set before us in the Gospel leads us rather to lay up treasures in Heaven, "where moth doth not corrupt," etc.

So this class do with as few luxuries in life as possible, in order that they may lay down their time and strength in His service. And the more they do this, the more they become copies of God's dear Son. Thus, if any one is engaged in the carpenter business—the same in which our Lord engaged when He was a youth—he will say, How can I minimize the affairs of life so that I can give more of my time to the Lord and less to earthly matters? And so it will be his endeavor to cut off the desire for earthly luxuries. More and more he will count the affairs of this life as loss and dross in comparison with the glory of the life beyond.

In proportion, therefore, as we imbibe the Truth, in that same proportion will be our desire to be fervent in spirit—in that same proportion we shall be striving to sacrifice, to cut off, to devote to the Lord this time and talent and energy. We do not think that the Lord would wish us to be too particular regarding earthly things and waste valuable time. For instance, we might say, I will keep this house as unto the Lord. And we might give too much of our time and attention to different matters about the house. But the Lord is inviting us to choose the better part and not to give too much time and attention to procuring and caring for ornaments and bric-a-brac. Whoever would give too much time to the housework or to other earthly affairs would show that he did not appreciate the privilege of the Lord's service.

When we look about us, we find that all men need so much and the Household of Faith need so much. "What do they need?" They need the Truth. . . . There is a satisfaction and a blessing in having the mind properly sustained. We would rather be without all the luxuries of life, and have this Truth. We would rather suffer the loss of everything else than suffer the loss of our being.

If everything else in life were taken from us, and we were without a penny in the world, we would still be rich toward God if we had the Truth. And so we all are needy in respect to this intelligence, this knowledge. . . . God has so arranged this matter that all those who believe and become children of God may have a share with Him in His work. And since we know these things, they become a test of our loyalty and our love. And the Lord seeing or not seeing this character in us will determine whether or not we shall be associated in the honorable work on the other side of the veil.—Z. '13:314, 315.

7

Finally, Brethren, Think!

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Philippians 4: 8.

COMPARATIVELY few, even of educated and scientific people, seem to appreciate the great power of the mind and its potent influence upon all the affairs of our lives. Few mothers realize that their very thoughts have to do with the molding of their children—giving them either helpful or injurious dispositions. Few fathers realize this. . . . When people come to know the power of the mother's mind for good or for evil toward the children, it will undoubtedly work a radical change in many homes; for it is our conviction that the majority of people would rather do right than do wrong, and that one of their chief difficulties and stumbling blocks is ignorance.

But while interested in mankind in general, we are never to forget that the Bible is addressed to the children of God, who have entered into a special covenant with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . The world will be taught and developed during the Millennium. But now, in the present life, the only opportunity for development is on the part of those whose great and only hope is a perfecting on the spirit plane in the Resurrection of the Just. As much, therefore, as we feel interested in the world, it is the Christian's duty to follow the example of the Lord and to be interested especially in his fellows, his brethren in Christ.

The Power of Thought

The Apostle's exhortation may be taken as a personal one by every Christian, and also as a general exhortation to the whole Church—that they seek to build one another up in the most holy faith and along the lines indicated in our Golden Text.

Each individual is responsible for the care of his own mind. In becoming Christians we gave our wills to the Lord, agreeing that henceforth we would not follow the dictates of our wills; but that, ignoring these, we would follow the guidance of the Lord's will. It was on this condition that the Lord received us into His family; and any failure to follow these terms is contrary to our covenant. The Lord through His Word gives us the necessary instructions as to what His will is; and these messages, received into good and honest hearts, bring forth fruitage of obedience, and this leads on to the development of the fruits of the Spirit.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Many Christians have learned to govern their actions, to refrain from carnal strife. Many have learned to control their tongues in a measure, remembering that the same tongue with which we praise God could be used in doing injury to fellow creatures, as the Apostle points out. (James 3:1-10.) But restraint of conduct and of word is difficult unless the mind, the will, be brought into line with the will of God. Hence God shows us the reason for what He requires, and sets before us exceeding great and precious promises. These are intended to work in us—to work in our minds and to work out in our words and actions the Lord's good pleasure, the Lord's will.

Questions for Self-Examination

The Apostle, in our Golden Text, points out the proper course for us to take in getting control of ourselves, our thoughts, our words and our conduct. Every thought should be challenged; for if an evil thought or a selfish thought or a mean thought, a depraved thought, be admitted, it will germinate and bring forth a great defilement, which will affect our words and our conduct, and will extend to others. We may learn to do the challenging readily, even along the comprehensive lines which the Apostle lays down in this lesson. What at first may require considerable time for decision will by and by be decided almost instantly:

(1) Is the thought which is seeking consideration in our mind an honorable one? If so, it may pass in and be entertained. If not, it should be immediately resented and driven out from the mind as an evil influence.

(2) Is the thought suggested a pure one—not sensual, not selfish? If so, if it pass these examinations, it may pass on for further consideration. If by these it fails to prove its purity, it should be immediately resented as a thought likely to do great harm—as would the entrance into our home of things infected with a plague.

(3) Is the thought lovely? Does it appertain to things that are lovable? Does it excite lovable influences, or is it identified more or less with hate, resentment, anger, malice? If lovely, it may pass on. If not, it must be immediately expelled,

not permitted to go further, to do harm to ourselves and to others.

(4) Is it reputable? This cannot mean: Is the thing well spoken of by the world? For the Apostle himself and our Lord Jesus were reviled by the world, who said all manner of evil against them falsely. The word reputable here must be taken to mean that which would be thought well of by all reputable people, if they knew and understood everything connected with the thought.

(5) Has the thought any virtue, or is it in any sense of the word praiseworthy? If so, it may be admitted. If not, it should be repelled; for even if it be blameless otherwise, the fact that it is not of any value is a reason for its rejection. We have no time and no place for things that are merely not bad. We desire to have in our hearts and our minds things that are positively good, helpful, beneficial in some way. Otherwise, the thought should be repelled as a mere cumberer of the ground of our hearts, of our minds, needed for profitable things. Novel reading is of this character — not evil, but not advantageous, not upbuilding.

Whatever we may be naturally, the people of God who follow the instructions of the Divine Word surely become noble people, helpful people, possessed of the spirit of a sound mind; and these things will be only a part of their preparation for the Kingdom and for the great work then to be entrusted to them as the servants of God under their Redeemer and Head.—Z. '16:168, 169.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

God prefers to use natural means rather than supernatural agencies; all of His children should be on the alert to serve His Cause at any and every moment. God's purposes will be accomplished. But happy is he who is accounted worthy of the privilege of any service to the Lord or to the least of His Brethren. Let us, then, be continually on the lookout, in an inquiring attitude of mind, desirous of knowing the mind of the Lord in every matter. —Z. '16:268.

◆

"He is faithful that promised."—Hebrews 10:23.

In various terms the Lord eight times repeated to Abraham His Covenant. And St. Paul calls our attention to the fact that these numerous repetitions and specifications of the Covenant, as well as God's oath attesting, were intended specially for us—for Spiritual Israel—"that . . . we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (in the Gospel); which hope (expressed in the Covenant made with Abraham and confirmed with an oath) we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which entereth into that within the veil."—Hebrews 6:18, 19—Z. '13:42.

◆

Whoever believes himself to be a child of God, trusting in Jesus and consecrated to the Lord's service, and seeking to walk in his footsteps, should expect the Lord's peace to rule in his heart, giving him rest, no matter what his circumstances or conditions in life; and if any of this class are without the peace let them look to it and repair the difficulty, for they are lacking either in faith or in obedience, and with the revival of these the dove of peace will surely return.—Z. 01:139.

◆

Some deal slackly with themselves in respect to little violations of their consecration vow, saying, —"What's the use" of such carefulness and so different a life from that of the world in general? Ah! there is great use in it, for victories in little things prepare for greater victories and make them possible: and on the contrary, surrender to the will of the flesh in the little things means sure defeat in the warfare as a whole. Let us remember the maxim laid down by our great Teacher—that he that is faithful in the things that are least will be faithful also in the things which are great. And this is the operation of a law, whose operations may be discerned in all the affairs of life. It is in vain that we pray, "Lord, Lord," and hope for great victories and the "crown of rejoicing," if we fail to do our best to conquer in the **little** affairs of daily life.—Z. '99:172.

◆

THE EARTHLY SEED

While the Ancient Worthies will be a separate and distinct class from the remainder of mankind, and while they are to have a special reward for their faith, in that they will "have a better resurrection," will come forth from the tomb in full human perfection; nevertheless, they will be under the Law, because there seem to be only two ways by which any could be brought into harmony with God. First, there will be those who sacrifice the earthly interests in the present time and are begotten to the spirit nature and are thus counted in as members of the Spiritual Seed; and secondly, those who will come in under the New (Law) Covenant, of which the Spiritual Seed will be the Mediator. As Abraham and the other Ancient Worthies cannot be included in the Spiritual Seed, the only place to put them, logically, is with the natural seed; and that they were not begotten to the spiritual nature is clearly evidenced by our Lord's words when he said of John the Baptist, "There hath not arisen a greater Prophet than John the Baptist, but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." He thus clearly marked the dividing line between those in the Kingdom class and those who cannot be in that class, however great they may be. We must understand, therefore, that the Ancient Worthies, in their perfection, will be subject to the rules and regulations of the Millennial Kingdom and from the very start will have the full perfection of all that the remainder of mankind will be able to attain during the Millennium. That special privilege will be a reward for the **faith** they manifested, and will gain for them participation in the Kingdom work, to be agents of the spiritual class and to attain the perfection of the human nature instantly, instead of having to climb up gradually out of imperfection, as will the remainder of the world of mankind.—Z. '10:149, 150.

◇

Let us wait for our change and seek by the Lord's grace to be so prepared for it in heart and character development that we shall welcome it with joy.—Z. '05:204.

◇

Do not try to do a great thing; you may waste all your life waiting for the opportunity which may never come. But since little things are always claiming your attention, do them as they come, from a great motive, for the glory of God, to win His smile of approval.—Z. '05:229.

◇

The rule of the Kingdom will be that the one who serves most will have the highest honor. Thus Jesus Himself is pre-eminently servant of all. His position is the highest in the Kingdom by Divine appointment, and others will range next to Him in proportion as they have His spirit of love, service, obedience and loyalty.—Z. '14:188.

◇

As our physical systems call for water continually and cannot do without it, so we have longings and ambitions and thirsts of a higher intellectual order. These the whole world is endeavoring to satisfy, but the thirst for wealth, for influence, for power, is insatiable. What a little farmer or merchant finds of restlessness and lack of satisfaction, the greater farmer and merchant and manufacturer and millionaire and prince and king and emperor find in their larger spheres. We remember the story of how Alexander the Great wept because there were no more worlds that he might conquer. We remember that Solomon the wise, after having tasted of all the streams of pleasure and novelty which the world could supply to the richest and wisest and most influential man of the time, cried out, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" What the whole world is seeking for and failing to get, our Lord Jesus gives to his people—water of life, satisfaction. Those who receive his blessing have in them wells of water springing up in their hearts, "A fountain ever springing." Their longing thirsts are satisfied as nothing else can satisfy them; they have more than ambition could ask. The divine bounties granted to them are exceedingly and abundantly more than they could have asked or thought.—Z. '05:31.

◇

The honor of being the first witness to whom our Lord manifested himself after his resurrection came to Mary Magdalene, who at one time was possessed by evil spirits, but who, being freed from their domination became a faithful and loyal follower of Jesus. This was not the Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha, neither was it Mary the "sinner," who washed our Lord's feet with her tears in the Pharisee's house. She is called Mary Magdalene, probably because her home town was Magdala.—Z. '05:158.

Whoever gets even a faint glimpse of the greatness of God's favor toward the Church, will not be surprised that in the divine plan so liberal an allowance as nearly nineteen centuries was made for the calling and chastisement and perfecting of the saints for the great and glorious work to which they, as joint-heirs with Messiah, are called. Neither will they think strange, the fiery trials which try all of these whom the Lord our God calls, and accepts as probationary members of the elect Kingdom class. They will perceive, readily enough, that if it was expedient, yea necessary, that our Lord Jesus, with all of his experience in the heavenly courts, must "learn obedience by the things which he suffered," and prove his loyalty to the Father by faithfulness even unto death, much more must his followers — whose previous history was that of sinners—be tried and thoroughly tested in respect to their loyalty to the Lord.—Z. '03:93.

◇

If we can see blemishes in the flesh of the "brethren," disapproved and striven against, we should remember that the evil which we see is that of our brother's enemy and not the evils of the brother himself, the "new creature;"—if so be that he gives us the assurance that his heart, his will, is in harmony with the Lord and his law of Love; and that he is daily seeking to learn the lessons taught in this school of Christ; and seeking to fight a successful warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh.—Z. '99:57.

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J A Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 110

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"My Covenant Will I Not Break"

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."—Psa. 89: 34.

THESE words of Jehovah God are very comforting and satisfying to his faithful children. As faith becomes a basis for things hoped for, so confidence and experience constitute a basis for faith to rest upon. The unchangeableness of our God is one of the attractive features of his character: his assurance is, "I am the same. I change not." Even when the Lord's word or sentence is against us—as in the case of his pronouncement against sin and sinners—and even though his unchangeableness will not permit him to excuse sin or clear the guilty, this very constancy becomes an assurance to us that as God has been strict and unchangeable in regard to the penalty pronounced, he will be equally strict and equally unchangeable concerning all the good promises and covenants which he has made to us.

As an illustration of this unchangeableness, we note the fact that under the death sentence six thousand years have elapsed, and over 50,000,000,000 of our race have gone into the prisonhouse of death;—yet God has not relented or shown the slightest sign of change. His sentence was a just one, and it could not be revoked. Then came in his love; and without violating his justice he provided a great sin offering,—"a ransom for all." In connection with this manifestation of love, in man's redemption, the Creator gave certain covenants and promises; and as we have learned of his unchangeableness in respect to the curse, the sentence, we learn proportionately to have confidence in his unchangeableness in respect to the promises he has made our race, based upon the great redemption effected for us.

"O, what comfort it brings,
My soul sweetly sings,
I am safe from all danger
While under his wings."

It is considered worldly wisdom to take for granted that no man will keep a covenant which he subsequently finds to be to his own disadvantage, unless he is bound by some kind of penalty—by the law. And those who have not learned to expect something of this kind of worldly wisdom in connection with their worldly affairs, have ofttimes been sadly disappointed and worsted: and their plans and arrangements based upon the covenants of others have been marred. The tendency of such experiences is to shake our confidence in humanity in general — and alas, sometimes, to shake our confidence even in some who have named the name of Christ and professed to be our brethren. Nevertheless, even such trying experiences have always worked blessings to such of the Lord's children as have accepted them in the proper manner. Such have said to themselves, The more I find of unfaithfulness and injustice in mankind, the more do I appreciate the absolute faithfulness and justice of the Lord, and of such of his people as do prove themselves loyal to principle: and the more earnestly do I determine that my own course in life shall be such as will always acknowledge the principle of justice, and make my positive and finished bargain and engagement like our Lord's—unbreakable, unalterable.

The Lord indicates not only his own estimation of this principle, but his desire to see it in all who aspire to membership in his family. To such he says, "Blessed is the man who voweth to his own hurt and altereth not." The Lord would have us careful how we would make covenants, vows, either to him or to others; but having made them, his will is that we shall consider them sacred, inviolate: even though we should find subsequetly that the arrangement was working out unfavorably as respects our temporal interests. There are some limitations in this direction which we will consider later on.

Divine Covenants and Promises.

There is a difference between conditional and unconditional promises which should not be overlooked. Some of the Lord's covenants are conditional, as for instance, the Law Covenant, which begins, "If ye obey my laws and keep my statutes," etc., I will do thus and so unto you. The Covenant of the Law, while it did bring to Israel "much advantage every way, chiefly in that to them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1, 2), was, nevertheless, a conditional covenant; and since Israel did not and could not keep its side of that covenant, therefore the divine promises attached to it and made conditional upon obedience, passed away so far as the people of Israel were concerned. All of the law's demand were met by our Lord Jesus, and to him and him alone passed all the divine agreements and obligations under that Covenant. The Lord has, however, made unconditional covenants with mankind: the first of these was through our representative, Noah, after the flood. As representing the race, God covenanted with Noah that he would never again destroy the world with a flood of waters; and the pledge of that covenant was the rainbow. It was wholly unconditional—it did not stipulate that no flood would come if Noah and his posterity would be faithful to the Lord, etc.

Another unconditional covenant was that made with Abraham which reads, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3.) There are no conditions or limitations here. It does not say, If you and your seed will be faithful, I will bless all the families of the earth through them; nor does it say, If all the families of the earth will seek me, they shall be blessed through your seed. There are no conditions or limitations whatever. As a matter of fact, God knew from the beginning that the natural seed of Abraham would not be fit to be the channel of blessing. From the very beginning he foreknew Jesus as the seed of Abraham and the Head of the Gospel Church, his body—as unitedly the foreseen and promised "seed of Abraham." He foresaw, even, that many who would be called during the Gospel age would fail to make their calling and election sure; and from the very beginning he had in mind as the seed of Abraham only the "called and chosen and faithful."

God knew the end from the beginning, he knew that he would find such a class. . . . He has been trying them, as the Apostle Peter says, with "fiery trials;"—proving their love and loyalty, and developing in them fruits and graces of spirit, in harmony with his own, such as will fit and prepare them as a whole, under their Lord and Head, for the great work of blessing the world, when the appointed time shall have fully arrived—during the Millennial age. Nor was it necessary to place limitations upon the blessing of all the families of the earth; because the blessing to be conferred upon all is not an everlasting one, but merely a blessing of knowledge, of opportunity, of assistance,— to the intent that so many of mankind as will to do so may come to a full knowledge of the truth, into harmony with God, and to full perfection of being. Afterward they will be tested as to their loyalty, and only the worthy will be granted life everlasting —all others being ultimately destroyed in the Second Death. Evidently there was no necessity for putting conditions and limitations upon this covenant. It represents God's good and benevolent purposes toward our race. He knew that his only begotten Son would be glad to become man's Redeemer, for the joy that he would set before him; he knew also that, in the time appointed for it, he could find amongst mankind a sufficient number who would appreciate the privilege of fellowship and joint-heirship with their Redeemer, and gladly and faithfully endure the tests, and acquire the character necessary to this work of blessing which he had purposed in himself. . . .

Another unconditional promise, or covenant, is called the "New Covenant." This one is also without limitations, without conditions; the divine Word says, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not [that being a conditional covenant], saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."—Heb. 8:8-12.

Nothing can be more clear than that this New Covenant is without a solitary condition, so far as the people to be blessed by it are concerned. It is a covenant or agreement wholly on one side—an unconditional promise on the Lord's part of what he will do for the world. We say for the world advisedly, because we are to remember that in respect to the Day of Atonement sacrifices and the blessings therefrom, Israel is a type of all the world of mankind desiring to come into covenant relationship with the Lord, as the Levites represented the household of faith, and the priesthood was typical of the royal priesthood, the Church,— Jesus the High Priest, and consecrated believers the underpriesthood.—1 Pet. 2:9.

What a wealth of blessing God has bound himself to accomplish for our race! How glad we are that there are no human conditions or limitations to hinder the fulfilment of these gracious promises, nor to unsettle our faith and our rejoicing therein! We do not mean to say that man will ultimately have nothing to do toward his own deliverance from sin and death; on the contrary, he will certainly not be delivered against his own will. But the blessings mentioned in these covenants are not the everlasting blessings pertaining to the eternity beyond the Millennium; they relate to the blessings of the Millennial age, which are, in divine providence, arranged to be world-wide—to include "all the families of the earth" for all of whom a blessing of knowledge and assistance and opportunity for return to divine favor has been provided by the Creator.

But how could God do this, may be inquired,— if he is just and will not clear the guilty? How could he promise all these blessings and opportunities to those who are admittedly guilty — sinners? We answer that this part of the divine program and arrangement is specified particularly in the prophecy of Isaiah (42:1-7.) There Jehovah points out his honored servant, the Lord Jesus, through whose faithfulness the entire work of blessing the world shall be accomplished; and the key to the entire matter is found in the statement "I . . . will appoint thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations."—V. 6 Leeser.

Israel's experiences under the Law Covenant prove to us what God knew beforehand; namely, that the fallen race was so out of condition as to be unable to keep any covenant which he could properly make with them. The proposition, therefore, upon which the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant are based, is that God would provide a substitute for Adam in the person of his well beloved Son, who, first demonstrating his own worthiness, would delight in carrying out his Father's plan for the blessing of our race; and with him God would make the covenant for the blessing of the world. As the world's representative, he would appoint or enter into a covenant with him, on behalf of the people. And to this our Lord assents, declaring that his death was "for the sins of the whole world" and that it was "the blood of the New Covenant" that sealed, made binding, made effective, God's New Covenant. The New Covenant is given to Israel and the world only indirectly; the Father's dealings are not with Israel nor with the world under this New Covenant, but with the Mediator of the New Covenant,—the Christ. During the Gospel age he is accepting the Church as the members of the body of this great Mediator, through the merit of the Head. When the entire Mediator shall be complete, the covenant will come into force, become effective to all the families of the earth,—thus constituting the blessing mentioned in the covenant made with Abraham.

The curse of the divine sentence will then end, and divine favor and power will be given the great Mediator who shall then begin his great work of ruling and teaching mankind in righteousness, and administering laws and regulations for their benefit;—for their physical, social, mental and moral uplifting. The whole arrangement shall be in the hands of the Mediator and his work of helping and restoring the race which he purchased with his blood shall progress throughout the Millennial age. At the close of the Millennial age, having accomplished all that can possibly be accomplished for the race,—having brought all to a knowledege of the truth, having given all an opportunity of restoration to divine favor and restitution to perfection, —there will be a final testing on the Father's part, and all found worthy—all who shall have learned to appreciate the divine character and the principles of the divine law—will be granted life-everlasting; and all found contrary to this shall be esteemed wicked, and shall be destroyed from amongst the people.—Acts 3:23; Psa. 145:20.

"That We Might Have Strong Consolation, Who Have Fled for Refuge to Lay Hold Upon the Hope Set Before Us: Which Hope We Have as an Anchor of the Soul, Both Sure and Steadfast." — Heb. 6:18, 19.

The words of our text apply to these exceeding great and precious convenant-promises of the divine Word. They assure us that our God will never break these covenants—yea, more, that he will not even alter, or amend, or change them in any particular. We can rest in hope, assured that he who has begun the good work in us and on behalf of the world, is able not only to complete the work in us, but to accomplish more for the world than it or we can ask or comprehend. Does not this knowledge of the immutability of the divine covenants give us a confidence, a faith in the Lord which brings with it strong consolation for every trial, every difficulty, every disappointment of this present time—assuring us that all of our experiences are working together as parts of a great whole of the divine program, not only for our glory, honor, immortality, but for the blessing of the world of mankind? They surely do! Hallelujah, what a Savior!

If now we allow our minds to gather into some extent the scope of these promises as expanded and explained by the apostles in the New Testament, we see that they take hold of, not only the life which is to come, but also of that which now is. They give us new joy, new courage, new zeal, new incentive in connection with the common tasks and duties of life,—to our families, to our neighbors, and to ourselves, and above all to our God. And they give us confidence and assurance in all the great and gracious hopes set before us in the gospel—in the Lord's willingness to do for us, and in his power to do exceedingly and abundantly more than we can ask or think.

Godlike Faithfulness to Covenants.

In two ways we who are pupils in the school of Christ are instructed. (1) By being shown through the perfect law of liberty our weaknesses and imperfections. (2) By being shown God's greatness and perfection. We need to see that we are not right, that we come far short of the glorious condition in which we (in Adam) were created, and which condition alone God could pronounce or consider "very good." The longer and more intently we look into the perfect law of liberty, the more we will discern our own blemishes, and the less favorably we are likely to think of ourselves; so that we might become discouraged were it not for the Lord's assurance that while he knows our imperfections better than we do, yet he is not regarding these, but covering them—allowing the merit of our dear Redeemer as a robe of righteousness to make us perfect and acceptable before him; —and that this acceptance and covering applies to us as long as we are seeking to walk in the Lord's way—"not after the flesh, but after the spirit." We see the Lord's character portrayed in his law given to Israel; and again in the still higher statement of that law, expressed by Jesus as the perfect law, the comprehensive law, the Law of Love—God's law, necessarily representing his character. Furthermore, God's promises also represent his character, and this double revealing to us of the divine character is with a view to an incitement of our love for those principles of righteousness, goodness, truth.

While seeking to copy the Lord in every particular, and to be fully rounded out in character-likeness to him, let us now have specially in mind as a part of the lesson of this text, God's faithfulness to his engagements; and let us, as his people, resolve that by his assistance and grace we will grow daily in this quality, in his likeness—that we, also, may say of ourselves, concerning our covenants or agreements, as the Lord says of himself, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."—Z. '02:342-345.

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Every thought harbored, every disposition exercised and cultivated, becomes a component part of individual character; and this character, which is more or less tender in early life, becomes fixed in the course of years. If the cultivation of character has been along the lines of righteousness and truth, according to the light possessed—whether of conscience merely, or of revelation also—the ripened fruit of an established, right-preferring and benevolent character is a blessed harvest in comparison with others, the reverse. If the cultivation has been along the lines of depravity, self-gratification and degradation, the terrible fruits are a fearful penalty. —Z. '12:368.

Ancient Worthies Under Faith Covenant

THE question may arise, Under what Covenant are the Ancient Worthies acceptable with God? Since they died before Christ and the opportunities of spiritual begetting, they were not favored with the high calling to membership in the Body of Christ, the elect Church. This the Apostle emphasized in Heb. 11:39, 40. He informs us that they "pleased God," but that apart from us, The Christ, they shall not be made perfect. In the Divine order the Church is to be the first-fruits of God's creatures. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." (Jas. 1:18.) Notice further that the Apostle's list of these includes Abel and Enoch, before the flood, and before even the Abrahamic Covenant was made. It also includes some who lived during the period of the Law Covenant, and who were therefore under it. How, then, should we classify these, as respects the three great Covenants, represented by Sarah, Hagar and Keturah?

The matter becomes very simple when we recognize the prime distinction between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Law Covenant that was added to it. The first was of faith, not without works. The second was of works, not without faith. As the Apostle says, the conditions of the Law Covenant were, "He that **doeth** these things shall live by them." (Rom. 10:5.) We are also reminded that the Sarah Covenant is of faith and not of works, but that where the faith is right, the works will "attest" the faith, even though they be not perfect; and that if judged by our works we would be condemned. The entire Jewish nation failed in the Covenant of "works of the Law;" yet a few individuals of that nation, rising by their faith superior to that Covenant, trusted not to it, but to the original Covenant of Mercy, Grace—the Sarah Covenant. These are the Ancient Worthies mentioned by the Apostle. He specifies that it was by faith they did and endured. According to their works they were condemned by the Law Covenant, but **according to their faith they were acceptable to God, along the lines of the Sarah Covenant,** even though they could not receive their blessing under it, until first the promised Seed should come and the blood of that Covenant be shed. Similarly Enoch and Abel, because of their **faith,** were acceptable to God and listed with the **faithful** of the Law Covenant, as in Divine favor, and subject to the blessing of the Sarah Covenant, because, although they lived before Abraham, they had the **Abrahamic faith** in the sense that, like Abraham, they trusted God for the grace which he is willing to bestow upon those who love him and seek his favor.

The New Covenant will really be a **New** Law Covenant, or a New Covenant of works of the Law. The old or first Law Covenant was faulty and insufficient for Israel, not because the Divine Law upon which it was based was faulty, nor because it was an unreasonable demand, but because men were imperfect, "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," and already under a death sentence, because of Adam's transgression. The Law Covenant had in Moses a faithful mediator, loyal both to God and to the Israelites, but he was incapable because his own life also was forfeited. God has made provision, therefore, that a New Law Covenant take the place of the Old, and has provided a new Mediator, who has already given his life as a redemption price—Jesus, the Head, and the Church, the Body. The finish of the sacrifice is in sight. The Head and many of his members have already, as New Creatures, passed beyond the vail. Soon the last member of the Body will have been thus "changed" and then the blood of the New Covenant will be sprinkled on behalf of "the sins of all the people"—the people of the Covenant, Israel, with an open door for all peoples to become sharers of their New Covenant blessings, even as we (Gentiles) are now privileged to share the Sarah Covenant blessings which belonged "to the Jew first." That sprinkling will be acceptable to God and efficacious for the blotting out of the sins of the whole world. This is abundantly attested in the Scriptures and in the types of these "better sacrifices."—Heb. 9:23.

Forthwith the Great Prophet, Head and members; the Great Priest, Head and members; the Great Judge, Head and members; the Great King, Head and members, will begin dealing with Israel and through Israel with the world. They will rule, bless, instruct and uplift so many as are willing. "And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hearken to that Prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23.) The New Law Covenant will operate exactly as the Old Law Covenant did, except that the "better sacrifices" sealing it will be fully efficacious, and not need to be repeated from year to year; and the power and glory of its Mediator will be superior, and the results of his work correspondingly great and lasting.

This is testified to additionally by the statement of Revelation, which pictures the Millennial epoch, with its great white throne of justice and mercy, before which all the dead, small and great, will stand—for trial; not to see whether they were sinners or not, for that is conceded. All were sinners. Nor will it be to see whether or not God is willing to forgive them, for that is conceded—the sacrifice of Christ will then have been accepted as a full "satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Their judgment or trial, like ours, will be to determine whether or not they will come into fullest harmony with God, and have his blessing of joy and eternal life, or, otherwise, be "destroyed from amongst the people." They will not be judged according to their faith, because they will be under the New Covenant of Law and works. As it is written, "They were judged every man according to their works."—Rev. 20:13.

They will be assisted step by step out of imperfection of mind and body up to perfection, including perfect works, which will be their standard or test. On the contrary the Gospel Church and the Ancient Worthies have not been judged according to their works, but according to their faith—works having been demanded to the extent of ability, as attesting faith. We are not helped out of the blemishes of the fallen nature, but instantly reckoned as lifted out of them, or as having them covered with a mantle of grace.

Bearing in mind the facts and conclusions above will assist us greatly in understanding our subject, the relationship of the Covenants to each other and to mankind. The original Covenant promised a blessing that should reach all mankind—a redemption from the Divine sentence, and an opportunity for the return to harmony with God, through faith and heart obedience. This promise has in some respects already had its fulfilment, as we have seen. God has already accepted, yea, been willing to lead or to draw, all who exercised faith in him and a hearty desire to live in harmony with his will. Already, in this sense of the word, the original Covenant operated before the flood, and since the flood, and toward Abraham, and toward all of Israel, who had the spirit of obedience and faith, and during this Gospel Age has operated amongst mankind in all nations and tongues. But a comparatively small portion of the race has received the blessing, because so small a proportion were in a condition to exercise "the faith of Abraham."

While at first it might appear that the adding of the Law Covenant was a disadvantage and similarly that the adding of the New Covenant might, in some respects, be a disadvantage or a curtailment or abridgment of the original, all-comprehensive Grace or Sarah Covenant, yet this is really not so. While the Law Covenant did condemn the nation, because they did not have the faith, it did bring a blessing to many of that nation—many more than were developed in other nations, which had no such Law Covenant, with its limitations, threatenings, chastisements, etc. The New Covenant will be still more successful. It will follow the reign of Grace under the Sarah Covenant and be a reign of Law. As it is written, "Righteousness shall he lay to the line and justice to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of misrepresentations."—Isa. 28:17.

The Redeemer and his followers will no longer be a flock of sheep for the slaughter, reviled amongst men, but to the contrary, they shall be the kings and priests, clothed with glory, honor and immortality, before whom "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God." (Rom. 14:11.) The King shall rule in righteousness and princes shall execute judgments in the earth.

Faith, giving place to sight, the test will be works, according to the ability; and everything less than the ability will receive stripes and corrections in righteousness. That reign of Law and good works will thus be rightly tempered to the condition of each individual, and the result, we believe, will be marvelous—the bringing of thousands of millions to perfection, in harmony with God. So far from the New (Law) Covenant being an abridgment of the Abrahamic (Sarah) Covenant it will be an **extension of it** which will make its blessings much farther reaching. The original Covenant now gathers those who can and will exercise faith and obedience. Its usefulness would thus be at an end, were it not for the added New (Law) Covenant, which, ignoring the lack of faith and obedience, will take hold of the world and, by chastisement and instructions, force obedience and knowledge and then gradually develop the heart-obedience of Abraham in so many of them as possible and destroy the others. Thus Abraham, "the father of the faithful," will become under the New (Law) Covenant the "father of many nations"—a multitude as the sand of the sea—as well as the father of the faithful under the original Sarah Covenant of faith and grace.

Thus we see that the influence of the original Covenant, after electing a Faith Seed, both natural and spiritual, will, through these by the New (Law) Covenant, bless a far greater number than by any other method conceivable. Thus again the Lord shows us how much greater are his arrangements than any which the human mind could have planned. Surely no flesh can glory in his sight. The more we see of his plans, his purposes, his methods, the more must we glorify him and realize our own nothingless, insignificance!—Z. '09:45-47.

Israel's Experiences Typical, Allegorical

Judges 2:1-19.

"I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely."—Hosea 14:4.

TODAY'S Study tells us of the death of Joshua, who became the leader of the Israelites at the death of Moses. He was a worthy example of faithfulness to God amongst his people. Under Divine direction he divided the land of Palestine amongst the ten tribes of Israel, giving each his portion with the understanding that the portion was the gift of the Lord, and that the more faith possessed the more quickly would the tribe enter into its inheritance.

The Israelites were enjoined by the Lord through an angel, especially sent as God's representative, that they should speedily take possession of the land, driving out their enemies, destroying their idols and altars of worship, and thus conquering the entire country for themselves as God's people and ridding themselves and their children of all idolatrous temptation. But instead of doing this, they made leagues with the various heathen peoples inhabiting the land, and brought themselves into more or less of a friendly relationship. This disobedience to Divine command proved to be a serious snare.

In studying the history of Israel, we are to remember that the Apostle tells us those things were allegorical. (I Corinthians 10:11.) They were true, they were real occurrences; but their chief object and purpose, from God's standpoint, was to illustrate certain great truths for Spiritual Israel, coming afterwards—the Gospel Church. Thus, for instance, when the Christian enters upon his new life as a result of his consecration to God, it corresponds to crossing Jordan—dying to old interests and entering into the new inheritance. Under the leadership of Jesus, our Joshua, we enter into new life full of courage and faith. Victories result.

Then we learn that the New Creature is to conquer the perverted appetities of his own flesh, which correspond to the idolatrous peoples who resided in Canaan. It is the duty of the New Creature to drive out these earthly hopes, ambitions, weaknesses, perversions, and oppositions to the Lord and His righteousness. If the work of exterminating were carried on thoroughly, the result would be a ripened character, strong in the Lord, full of faith, obedience, joy, peace and blessing.

However, like the Israelites of old, in too many cases the Lord's people make a truce with their own fleshly weaknesses. They fail to drive these out, and fail to overthrow the altars of passion, avarice, etc. These weaknesses and depravities of the flesh for a time cower before the new nature, entreating mercy, patience and a measure of gratification. But so surely as these are granted, the result is that the passions and weaknesses become stronger and stronger and the New Creature is worsted in the battle, until he must cry to the Lord for deliverance, lest he perish before the onslaught of his own passions and desires. Thus the lives of many Christian people are a succession of battlings and defeats—captivities. The battle should have been fought out at first. The will should have been fixed firmly on the side of righteousness, truth, obedience to God.

It is difficult to determine how much all of the Lord's people suffer as a result of not being firm enough, rigorous enough, in their dealings with their own flesh, especially at the beginning of their Christian experiences. The only remedy is to cry unto the Lord as the Israelites did when they found themselves hard pressed. As the Lord delivered them, so He is willing to deliver all of His Spiritual Israelites.

However, it is certainly a shame for Christians that their defeats are so numerous, as it was a shame to the Israelites that, during the period of the Judges, they were eighteen times oppressed by their enemies—slaves where they should have been masters. The one great lesson of all this to the Natural Israelites and to the Spiritual Israelites is the lesson of God's mercy, as expressed in our text. The Lord is very gracious, willing to forgive our trespasses and to assist us when we realize our wrong condition and appeal for help. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."

Joshua's Wise Exhortation

The Book of Joshua closes with the account of his death, and the Book of Judges begins with incidents covering the same period. When Joshua realized that his work was done and that he was about to be gathered to his fathers— to sleep with his fathers in death—he called the Israelites, and reminded them of the Lord's mercies and manifest favors toward them in bringing them thus far and finally giving to each tribe the allotment of its inheritance in the Promised Land. Then he warned them respecting the dangers of the situation, the necessity for being separate from the people of the land—Gentiles; otherwise the tendency might be toward idolatry. He urged upon all a full settlement of the mind, the will, on the side of the Lord and against all the heathen religions. It was then that he took his stand and announced, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve: as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The others joined with him in the same resolve.

Our lesson tells us that all the days of Joshua, and the days of the others of the judges who outlived Joshua, things went well with the Israelites. They had the Lord's blessing and were prosperous. These leaders had in mind the Lord's wonderful dealings, and realized the importance of being on the Lord's side, if they would have His blessing. The idolatries that came in were subsequent.

The true God has always prohibited idols, while the false gods have usually been represented by idols. The idols, according to human reasoning, would appear to be an excellent way of keeping religion before the mind; but it was not God's way, and hence was not advantageous. As the Israelites noted the idolatrous worship of their neighbors, they doubtess felt that the latter were the more religious, because of this outward demonstration.

Moreover, in connection with the heathen forms of worship were various licentious practises, which to some extent would draw from curiosity and, through the weaknesses of the flesh, appeal to the Israelites. The true God, on the contrary, had instituted in their midst a worship which was pure in itself, in every way condemning sin, pointing out the necessity for its cancelation and the need for drawing near to God in the way of His appointment. In a word, the true religion appealed to the highest and noblest sentiments, while the false religions of the Canaanites appealed to the baser passions, combining a form of godliness with gratification of the flesh, dancings and various saturnalia.

But as for the Christian who condemns the Israelites very severely for wandering off, time and again, into the idolatries of his heathen neighbors and requiring to be punished of the Lord that he might turn again and seek the Lord in the right way—let such Christian remember the antitype—how forms of godliness are inclined to take the place of true heart-worship, reverence; and how the weaknesses of the flesh are inclined to assert themselves, to justify themselves and, if possible, to make themselves appear to be in accordance with the Divine will. . . .

Verse 17 and its connections seem to indicate that the record of our lesson covers a long period of centuries of Israel's experiences, under many judges. When they repented, the Lord raised up judges, or, as we say, deliverers, through whom their adversities would be corrected. Yet even these repeated experiences did not deeply enough impress the great lesson, so that they needed to learn their lessons over and over. When the judge would bring them back from their adversities, and they would have rest for some years during his lifetime, it was merely to fall away after his death. Nevertheless, the Lord's Covenant was with the nation. The centuries since have shown the persistency of God's mercy.—Z. '14:380-381.

Privileges of the Throne of Grace

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> "Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews 4:16.

WHILE these words of the Apostle have always been applicable to the people of God, they are especially important to us, for we realize that we are now living in this very evil day to which he referred in his letter to the Ephesians; that it has already come, and that only those who have put on the whole armor of God will be properly equipped to withstand the assaults of the enemy. His instruction that the Christian supply himself with the whole armor of God indicates a need for the armor, a difficulty in withstanding the attacks to be expected in this day, and the fewness of those who will eventually stand. The exhortation is not to take merely the shield of faith, not merely the helmet of salvation, not merely the breastplate of righteousness, not merely the Sword of the Spirit, not merely the sandals of preparation, not merely the girdle of Truth; but **all** of these. The implication is that we **need** all of these to stand all the assaults to be expected in this evil day. . . .

But with all the preparation the earnest Christian may make, he should see to it that there is a direct and continual communication between his heart and his Lord. In the Bible God has given us His Message, His promises, His instruction, in advance. Elsewhere St. Paul has declared that this Word "is sufficient, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." We appreciate this assurance and also realize our own unworthiness, our littleness and our imperfections. But despite all these our Lord has assured us that we may approach with courage the Throne of Heavenly Grace and there obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need—and forgiveness of sins.

This promise of forgiveness does not include the thought of original sin; for that is forgiven us at the time when we consecrate ourselves to the Lord; and therefore it need not be remembered day by day. But, having surrendered our will to the Lord and having started out in the narrow way, we should know what our reasonable service to Him would include. (Romans 12:1.) We have **need** of every provision that He has made for us. It is our daily transgressions that require daily forgiveness. Any one, therefore, who would be a good soldier of the Lord Jesus must keep in close touch with Headquarters. This he is privileged to do by coming daily to the Throne of Grace.

If we would contrast the privilege of approaching God with that of approaching earthly potentates, we would see a marked manifestation of God's favor to us. With the King of England or any other earthly sovereign, the dignity of the throne is maintained so that it is difficult for any to approach. One must earnestly desire to do so. And if he would come into the King's presence, he must wear a certain style of dress, observe a certain etiquette, and also have a proper introduction. If the king were gracious, an interview might then be granted. But our God, the Mighty Creator of the Universe, has graciously granted to each one who has been begotten of the Holy Spirit the privilege of bringing everything to Him in prayer—all his needs, all his difficulties—and of calling Him by the endearing name of "Father." What wondrous grace!

Then each of God's children before approaching the Throne of Grace should seek to know what things are approved of the Lord and what things are disapproved. It should be the one ambition of the child of God to know the Father's will and to guide his affairs accordingly. But taking it for granted that our hearts are fully submissive to the Lord's will, the Apostle is here describing the Christian soldier who has put on the whole armor of God. He will need, with all his armor, to cultivate and to use the privileges of prayer.—Ephesians 6:18.

The Manner of Acceptable Prayer

The foregoing reference tells us how prayer should be offered—"praying always **with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.**" We should lay emphasis on the words **"in the Spirit."** Contrast this sort of prayer with others which are not "in the Spirit," but merely formalistic. We know that the heathen have great formalities in their prayers. The Chinese, for instance, have a wheel on which certain prayers are inscribed, and they think that the more times the wheel is turned around the more times the prayer goes up to their god. These are vain repetitions. But the Chinese are heathen—they have not learned of the true God. Others approach the true God, using vain repetitions, not knowing what they want or what is best for them or what is God's will. Some Christians use printed forms of petition which are not really their own sentiment or spirit, but which as worshipers they offer to the Lord in a more or less perfunctory manner. Some prayers are represented by beads.

These are used by our Roman Catholic friends. Each bead represents a prayer, and the repetition is supposed to help the worshiper. He counts these beads over and over, repeating his prayer over each bead.

All these endeavors on the part of humanity, heathen and Christian, to approach God in prayer indicate that there is a recognized need of Divine assistance. But God is not to be approached in a merely formal manner. He is not to be mocked. If we should approach an earthly king in such a perfunctory way, he would see through the hollowness of the petition and would resent it. And so we may know that if we come with merely a lip service to God our prayers will not be heard. We must remember, too, that only those prayers are acceptable to God which come from those in covenant relationship with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way by which we have a right to come to the Almighty addressing Him as **"Our Father."**

Reverting again to the text, "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication — in the Spirit," we understand the Apostle to mean that with every prayer we offer, whatever may be our petition, there should be an earnestness of spirit. The prayer must always be offered "in the spirit," with heart-appreciation of what we are doing. Otherwise it would not be acceptable to God. It must be a **"supplication,"** an earnest entreaty. When we pray to God, we are to "watch thereunto, with all perseverance" having importunity in prayer, not soon growing weary if our petitions do not seem to be quickly answered. We are not to pray for the things that the Word of God does not justify us in believing are the Lord's will, but for the things which we believe are His will; and we are to **really desire** what we ask for. Then we are to watch for the fulfilment of our prayers, and thus be prepared for the blessing when it comes. Our Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him. —Matthew 6:32, 8.

Selfish Petitions Unjustified

The object of prayer, then, is to benefit **ourselves,** and to bring us into that attitude of mind which will be in heart-readiness to receive our Father's blessing. God does not wish to give His choicest blessings where they would be fruitless. When He gives us these blessings, He purposes that our hearts shall be in that condition which will assimilate them and bring forth fruitage. We must ever be in an attitude of full submission to His will. We know that our Heavenly Father not only has the fullest knowledge of our needs, but is waiting to bestow His richest gifts upon His children, as soon as we are ready for them. Then let us never come before Him with vain, meaningless repetitions.

While the world would pray merely for food, clothing, temporal blessings or for victory over their enemies, we as God's children should yield up our wills to Him and pray in the words of our Master's exemplary prayer: "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done." Then, "Give us this day our daily bread," whether it be little or much—not saying what kind of food, but simply receiving what He sees we need. We have placed these matters entirely in the Lord's hands. We ask especially for the **spiritual Bread.** Our prayers are to be along the lines of the Spirit and not of the **flesh.** We are to pray only incidentally for the earthly things, because we have consecrated our bodies to God. Since the body is to die, since it has been accepted as a sacrifice, we are to seek to perpetuate that body which we have given to the Lord only long enough for our spiritual development and testing and for the completion of whatever work He has for us to do. We are also to be willing and glad to surrender it as soon as the Lord is ready to consummate the sacrifice. We have it now only as the instrument of the New Creature.

As New Creatures, then, we are to pray always in harmony with the interests of this new nature. We are to hunger for the Bread from Heaven and to feed upon it. We are to develop the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. We read that the Father is more willing to give good things to them that ask Him than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. So then, we are not only to pray in the Spirit, but as the Lord's Word indicates, our prayers are to be along the lines of the Spirit, of the New Creature, whose needs are first in our sight and in the Lord's sight, and whose interests the Lord is especially pleased to bless and to have us consider and pray for.

The Christian's Vital Breath

The logical conclusion of all this is that the Lord's consecrated people would have little to pray for of an earthly kind, realizing that with the Church the end is not restitution, but sacrifice unto death, and then the glorious resurrection. Therefore the prayers of the consecrated should be for grace to meet in a faithful spirit our various trials and difficulties . . . We need much grace to be rightly exercised by the trials and the assaults of the enemy and to realize that all these things are to work together for good to us who love God, who are "the called according to His purpose."

The Lord's people are encouraged to take part in the prayer meeting, and individually they are to approach daily the Throne of Grace. Our Lord has declared that where two or three are met together in His name He will be in their midst. When a petition is made having something of general interest, we are to unite our hearts that the blessing may extend to many hearts. The suggestion is that the Lord's people should do considerable of their praying in fellowship, in cooperation. But this would not hinder our private praying to the Lord, hourly if need be, telling him of our realization of our faults and our weaknesses and asking for the application of the precious merit of our Savior's sacrifice to remove every spot and every wrinkle from our garments. Such prayer is the very essence of the Christian's life, his "vital breath."

We find that the encroachments of the Adversary and of the world and the flesh are liable to discourage us or to entangle us with the things of the present life. But the Lord has made it so possible for us to approach Him that we can go to Him with **any** trial, **any** difficulty, and be sure that our petition has Divine attention and will have Divine aid. We have spoken of our fleshly weaknesses as sometimes hindering us from prayer. There is a disposition on the part of many Christians, after having done something that has wounded the conscience, to avoid going to the Lord in prayer for awhile, to dread to go, to feel ashamed to go— thinking that they will feel better about it afterwards. This course is fraught with great danger; for it is likely to hinder our spiritual growth. Therefore it should not be permitted. We should realize that there is all the greater need of our going then to the Throne of Heavenly Grace. The Lord has known of our weaknesses in advance. He knew beforehand of our failure, and wished us to profit by the experience, that we might, in harmony with our prayers, become stronger against sin, against everything displeasing to Him.

One of Satan's Chief Methods of Attack

The Adversary has to do, no doubt, with seeking to interrupt our prayers, our communications with the Father. One of our hymns declares that

"Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

We need not go to this extreme of thought, that Satan really does so tremble; but we may know that he realizes something of the power of prayer in the life of the child of God, and one of his chief lines of attack is to seek to cut off our communication with the Lord. Just as in warfare a skilful general seeks to cut off the enemy from its communication with headquarters, with its base of supplies, so with Satan. If he could succeed in cutting off our communication with the Heavenly Courts, we would be so much more liable to fall under his mischievous and wicked assaults. Then we would indeed be helpless, without Divine direction.

Is it asked, What could Satan do to cut off our communication? We reply that there are various ways of intruding upon the human mind—thoughts may enter the mind while the child of God is at prayer or at other times—thoughts of business, of pleasure, of sin, of worldly interests and projects, etc. We do not know how much power the Adversary is given in connection with the Lord's people. We **do know** that he is powerless to interfere with their **will.** But he has power to stimulate certain organs of our minds, so that unless we are very alert we might be cut off from proper fellowship with the Lord, and our Christian courage might become more or less weakened. Thus we would be proportionately less able to resist the world, the flesh and the Adversary.

It is, therefore, proper to take every precaution to keep the lines of communication with our Heavenly Father well open. For instance, in private prayer, if there is a tendency toward drowsiness or toward thoughts going to other things, then we might lift the head, if it be bowed; or if the eyes be closed, we might open the eyes, and raise them. We are to see to it that in all our prayers and supplications these are in the Spirit, that they are not perfunctory, not formalisms. We are to see to it that they are the real expressions of our heart. We may say that a few sentences of real heart-prayer will accomplish more good for the child of the Lord than any amount of lip service. We advise that any who have difficulty in keeping the mind concentrated while in prayer should rather intensify and shorten their petitions and that in all their prayers they should see that the things they desire and pray for are in harmony with the Lord's Word — in the interest of the New Creature.—Z. '15: 243-245.

"Ye Were Bought With a Price"

I Corinthians 6: 20.

It will be noticed that the Apostle refers, not to the world, but to the Church in the statement, "Ye were bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ." Other Scriptures tell us that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man"—that He redeemed the world. We are to remember, however, that this work of redemption covers centuries. Promises respecting it were made long centuries before Jesus came. He accomplished a certain portion of the work — the all-important part of giving Himself a Ransom price for all—laying down His life.

But while His life was thus laid down, to be the price of the sins of the whole world, it has not yet been applied for the world's sins. If it were, then the world would no longer be under Divine condemnation, "children of wrath," but would in some sense of the word be back in fellowship with God. The price laid down by the Redeemer at Calvary is eventually to be made applicable to the sins of the whole world, but not yet. It will not be made applicable to the whole world until after the gathering out of the world—of all nations, classes—the Bride of Christ, the "elect."

In harmony with this we read that our Lord Jesus after His resurrection ascended up on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us—for the household of faith—not for the world. Hence any blessing, and reconciliation with God, any arrangement of Divine favor and everlasting life, is not open to the world, but merely to believers, the "household of faith": "To us who believe He is precious"; "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous." Unbelievers have no Advocate with the Father, and consequently have no forgiveness of sins, no reconciliation, but are still under the condemnation of death. "We have escaped the condemnation that is on the world."

How fully these different texts of the Divine Word dovetail with each other and with the facts! We have peace; the world has no peace. God is our Father; the world is under condemnation, and are "children of wrath," under sentence of death, and not recognized by the Creator in the present time, although the Scriptures show us that He has very gracious plans and arrangements for mankind in general by and by—during the Messianic reign of Jesus and the Church, His Bride. Then, in this class, the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), all the families of the earth will be blessed.

The World Is Not Yet Bought

Would it be right, some one inquires, to say that the world is "bought with a price"? We answer that it would not be strictly right to say, but we need not quarrel with those who fail to state the matter in exactly the proper language. Rather, we might surmise that they are speaking of things that are not yet accomplished as though they were already finished. God assures us that in due time the price which our Lord laid down at Calvary will be made applicable to the world under the gracious terms of the New Covenant, which He will make first with Israel. Nevertheless, the point stands out clearly and distinctly that thus far the Ransom-price has not yet been applied to any members of Adam's race except the household of faith—believers. All things belong to these. Nothing belongs to the world as yet.

The privilege granted to the Church through her great Redeemer and Advocate is that His merit imputed to her permits her to share with Him in His sacrifice of the earthly nature, and to become joint-heirs with Him in His glorious arrangements of glory, honor and immortality on the Divine plane.

When we speak of the Church of the First-born we are to remember that the words carry us back to the typical first-borns, who were delivered from death on the occasion of the first typical Passover. There the first-borns of Israel were passed over or spared when other first-borns perished. Subsequently, they were all exchanged for the one tribe of Levi, which thereafter was the tribe of the first-borns, and as such was set apart for Divine service in connection with the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. They were not all priests, though this was the priestly tribe. Only a few out of the whole number were selected for the priesthood. So it is with the Church of the First-borns; they will all be overcomers, they will all be loyal and faithful to God, but only a "little flock" will be found specially saintly, holy, acceptable unto God through Christ, and these will be the antitypical Priests: "Ye are a Royal Priesthood."—1 Peter 2:9.

Hence James declared (1:18), "Ye are a kind of First-fruits unto God of His creatures." Of course, our Lord Jesus was primarily the First-fruits of all God's creatures. Secondarily, the Bride class will be a part of that First-fruit company. Then there will be a large company of saintly people who will come through "great tribulation," "will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb," and attain the spirit nature. These also will be a part of the First-fruits of God to the spirit nature—all on the spirit plane. Then will come God's favor to mankind in general—the after-fruits of His earthly creation—a great company, gathered during the Millennium. All of the evil doers and corrupters of the earth will be destroyed, but those in full perfection will be a glorious fruitage unto God.

St. Paul writes respecting the resurrection of "every man in his own order"—his own band or company. The first of the earthly nature to experience resurrection—that is, a full resurrection, or raising up completely out of death and imperfection—will be the Worthies, but they will not be part of the First-fruits unto God of His creatures, for they will be, with the remainder of mankind, regenerated by The Christ, the Giver of everlasting human life, secured at the cost of His own sacrifice. With all the remainder of humanity, they will come under the terms of the New Covenant. Indeed, they will be the first to be blessed by that New Covenant arrangement. But since the Divine Programme deals with the world as a whole, Messiah will not deliver up any portion of the world, even those perfected, until the end of the thousand years of His reign of glory and restitution. Consequently, the Worthies will belong to the "after-fruits"— the human fruitage of the Divine Plan connected with our earth.

At the close of the thousand years, when Messiah shall have completed the work of restitution for all the willing and obedient, and shall destroy in the Second Death all refusing to make progress toward righteousness, then the Mediator steps out from between God and men and leaves the world exposed to the full demands of Divine Justice in letter and in spirit. This will not mean their injury, because in perfection humanity is quite capable of being and doing all that Divine Justice requires. The whole world then being perfect there will be no excuse necessary for any of them, and hence no mediation on behalf of any will thereafter take place.

It will be at that time, after the Mediatorial Kingdom shall have passed, and Jesus shall have delivered up the Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:27), that Satan, the personification of evil, will be loosed from his prison-house for a little season —to tempt, to test, to try, to prove all those that dwell upon the face of the whole earth.

In the thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom they will be shielded from all outside temptations and will be helped over and forgiven the imperfections of the flesh, while attaining the fleshly perfection. But at the close of the thousand-year period, having attained the perfection of the flesh, and having had large experience with sin and righteousness, good and evil, it is as proper that they should be tested as that Adam was tested in the beginning—tested to see whether or not the lessons, blessings, experiences and opportunities have fully committed them as lovers of righteousness and haters of iniquity. If these have, then the trials that will come upon them through the permission of sin and temptation will be met accordingly, with loyalty to God, to the truth and to righteousness. All such will gain the victory over the temptations.

But such as really at heart still love sin will be entrapped and ensnared and manifested. Then the trials or judgments from Heaven will destroy them and Satan, that the world may be cleansed of all who love sin, and be enjoyed thereafter only by such as love righteousness and hate iniquity.

7 True, God knowing the heart, could judge all of those people without any testing by Satan, but many of His creatures, unable to read the heart, might wonder respecting the Divine Justice which would smite down some of their fellows, who outwardly were righteous, and they might consequently be continually in fear and trepidation lest they should thus be smitten down; hence the Almighty has adopted the method of making this temptation open and above board, to be witnessed by angels and men. Thus it was with Adam in his trial, in his sentence, and in the execution of the penalty. Thus it will be at the close of the Mediatorial reign of Christ. Those who then sin wilfully will be violators of the New Covenant and will die accordingly, just as Adam violated the Covenant under which he was placed, perfect, holy and with the promise of everlasting life.

The fact that this testing of mankind will be after the end of the thousand years of the Mediator's reign, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to the Father, does not prove that the glorified Jesus will have nothing to do with the destruction that will come upon Satan and those obedient to Him. Quite to the contrary. As Jesus was the Divine Agent, Instrument, Word, Mouthpiece, **Logos,** in all the work of creation, and prior to undertaking the Mediatorial work, so, highly exalted now in honor, next to the Father, and at His right Hand of Power, He will undoubtedly be the Father's Representative in that judgment upon the wilful sinners, who with Satan will be consigned to the Second Death.

Here the question may arise in the minds of some, What did the Apostle mean when he said in 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26, "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"?

The Apostle is speaking of those things which are against or contrary to mankind—those things which hinder men from keeping the Divine Law, and thus being in full harmony with their Creator. Every such thing is an enemy, and is to be destroyed and be put out of the way—ignorance, superstition, vice, human weaknesses, are some of the enemies of righteousness, and, therefore, enemies to the best interests of humanity. Death is such an enemy, because it is death working in us that causes all of our difficulties.

All the imperfections, whether moral, or physical, or mental, are the workings of death. Because death is thus working in humanity, therefore the righteously intentioned cannot do the things that they would. The work of Messiah's reign will be to put down, to put away, not only other oppositions, but this opposition of the workings of death. Gradually mankind will be lifted up, up, up, out of all that weakness, out of death, to the full perfection of his being. Then death will be destroyed—the Adamic death, which came upon all men through one man's disobedience, and which is to be canceled, done away completely, because of Christ's obedience, even unto death.

Only toward the close of that thousand years of the reign of the great Mediator will this work of completely overthrowing death be accomplished. Then all mankind will have been delivered, not only from the tomb, but from every shade and degree of death—the whole world will be alive in the same sense that Adam was alive before death passed upon him, or he was affected by the sting of sin.

Then the Kingdom will be turned over to the Father. Those who will die during the thousand years, as wilful evil doers, will die the Second Death. It is not an enemy of man; it is the righteous sentence of a righteous God in the interest of His creatures—those who wilfully prefer sin shall be destroyed from amongst the people, because their influence will be to corrupt the earth. The Second Death, therefore, is not included amongst the enemies, and is not the death that Jesus will destroy.

Neither is Satan one of the enemies whom Jesus will then destroy. He was an enemy before man sinned, and his rebellion was not brought about by man's sin. He was subject to Divine authority before man was created, and will be a subject of Divine authority after man shall have been redeemed and restored. It will not be for the Mediator to deal with him, but for Divine Justice to determine his deserts. Besides, it is said that he will be destroyed in the Second Death, in the death from which there will be no redemption, no resurrection, no recovery.—Z. '12;107-109.

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Love is opposed to selfishness and does not even "seek her own" rights, although it may be necessary that love be restrained and ruled at times by justice and wisdom.—Z. '06:301.

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We are to remember that the thing which the Lord most appreciates and the thing which is most difficult for us to sacrifice is self. Hence we read, "A broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise." (Psa. 51:17.) If we have given our hearts to the Lord we have given him all that we possess, and he will see to it that this shall cost us enough to test the loyalty and sincerity of our sacrifice.—Z. '06:271.

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How abundantly the Lord does reward all of our little efforts in the service of truth and righteousness—in his service—whatever our talents, few or many.—Z. '06:318.

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J S Maloon

Old Corn Gems

No. 111

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

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to attain the temporal blessings promised
If adversity seems to go with us, and we
ith disappointments and more or less fraudu-
nspiracy to take away from us our spiritual
gs, as Jacob met with disappointment which
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gs, we, like him, should patiently wait for
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t the Lord will bring out the promised results
end; knowing that he is on our part, and

covenant with grandfather Abraham. He c
out his program successfully, and Esau becam
friend. The lesson for spiritual Israelites a
this line is.—We should not be sticklers f
justice and the last penny in earthly matters. Ra
we may use the earthly mammon generousl
make and keep the peace, and to forward
spiritual interests. Our readiness to do this
measure or guage our appreciation of the spiri
interests, in comparison to which earthly blessi
"Mammon" should be esteemed as loss and dr

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Questions re the Covenants

What Is the Abrahamic Covenant?

(1) Is it for the selection of the Seed?

Its promise is **The Seed:** (1) Jesus; (2) The Christ; (3) The earthly seed through them.

(2) Or is it the blessing of all the families of the earth?

Ultimately, yes. The result will bless all the nations.

(3) When did it begin—with Abraham, Isaac or Abel?

With Jesus Christ; but its provisions extend backward and forward to all who have exercised "the faith of Abraham."

What Is the Sarah Covenant?

(1) Is it proper to say that the Sarah and Abrahamic Covenants are one and the same thing?

The Abrahamic Covenant primarily is the Sarah Covenant—the Faith or Promise Covenant.

(2) Under what Covenant were the Ancient Worthies developed, Abrahamic or Sarah?

The Abrahamic or Faith Covenant, typified by Sarah. All justified by faith are of this Covenant. The others are covenants of works.

(3) Are the Ancient Worthies the fleshly seed, or are the Jews who come under the New Covenant in the Millennial Age the fleshly seed?

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under the New Covenant will, as children of "the Anointed," be grandchildren of Abraham, who typified God—the Father.

(4) Is the Sarah Covenant as comprehensive as the Abrahamic Covenant?

No! It relates only to the "Seed of Promise."

(5) Does the Sarah Covenant come to an end at the close of the Gospel Age?

Yes.

(6) Does the Sarah Covenant end when the last member of the spiritual Seed is born, or does it end after the Ancient Worthies come forth?

After both; the two being shown in Joseph and Benjamin.

(7) If the Sarah Covenant brings forth the spiritual Seed, how can we say that both seeds are brought forth under the Abrahamic Covenant?

The dual feature is shown in Rachel.

(8) If both the seeds are brought forth under the Sarah Covenant then how about Gal. 3:16, where it speaks of **The** Seed which is Christ?

The Christ is **the Seed,** but the **"promise"** is "sure to **both.**"—Rom 4:16.

(9) Are those called to membership in The Christ justified by the sacrifice of the man Christ Jesus?

Most assuredly, "By faith in his blood." Faith in the New Covenant justifies nobody. Those blessed under the New Covenant will be justified by

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I Corinthians 15:25, 26. "He must reign until hath put all enemies under His feet; the last my that shall be destroyed is death"?

The Apostle is speaking of those things which against or contrary to mankind—those things ch hinder men from keeping the Divine Law, thus being in full harmony with their Creator. ry such thing is an enemy, and is to be destroyed be put out of the way—ignorance, supersti- are some of the

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Golden Text:—"Men ought always to pray [illegible]
—Luke 18:1.

Israel- A prince with God Gen. 32:1-32

FLEEING from his father's home, Jacob traveled a distance of nearly five hundred miles to Chaldea, the original home of his grandfather Abraham, where his uncle Laban still lived. His esteem for the promise of God had made him a pilgrim and a stranger, a wanderer from home, just as Abraham's faithfulness to the call had taken him from home in the opposite direction. While the blessings God had promised to Jacob were earthly and temporal, and in these respects differed from the promises which are made to spiritual Israelites, nevertheless, in order to prove Jacob's worthiness of the blessings—in order to test his faith in God's promises, he was permitted to pass through various trying experiences and disappointments. One of these was a love-affair with Rachel, his cousin, for whom he served his uncle in all fourteen years, seven before he got her as a wife, and seven years afterward; his uncle taking a dishonest advantage of

e see Jacob's patience and persistency, and note with pleasure that he never for a moment seems to have doubted the promises of God that he should be blessed as the inheritor of the Abrahamic promise.

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," would seem to apply well to Jacob's career. So energetic was he in Laban's service, so successful in all that he undertook, so persevering, that his uncle soon considered his service indispensable, and was glad to make favorable terms with him to have him remain and take chief charge of his property. Shrewdly Jacob bargained for an interest in the increase of the flocks and herds, etc., as his salary, and practically became a partner. There was nothing dishonest in his making a bargain with Laban that all the brown sheep and streaked and speckled goats should be his; nor was there anything wrong in his scientifically increasing the proportionate numbers of these colored and speckled animals. Laban became aware, before long, that he had a very capable and shrewd son-in-law, and, moreover, that the Lord's blessing was with him. He fain would have had him remain permanently in Chaldea, but Jacob's mind was full of the Abrahamic promise and of the reiteration of that promise to himself in the vision at Bethel, and he desired to return to the land of promise. He surmised, however, not without good cause, that his uncle would use force to restrain him from leaving, or to take from him some of the cattle, etc., which were properly his under the contract, and hence he chose an opportunity for leaving when Laban was absent.

Laban was evidently a powerful sheik, having many servants, and indeed Jacob had become so by this time, as the narrative shows that he was able, shortly after, to give away as a present to his brother Esau, 220 goats, 220 sheep, 30 camels, 50 head of cattle and 20 asses. But when Laban pursued, with the full intention of bringing back Jacob, his family and servants and flocks and herds, God interfered, warning Laban in a dream, saying, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob from good to bad"—margin. In consequence of this dream, and Jacob's subsequent fair statement of his side of the case, showing clearly that he had not wronged Laban, but that Laban had repeatedly dealt hardly with him, he was let go on his way in peace.

If we draw a lesson from these incidents respecting ourselves, as heirs of the promises of God, spiritual Israelites, it would be that while our hearts are full of rejoicing in God's promises we should not expect these to come to us wholly without our effort to secure them. If God has promised us spiritual blessings, we should put forth the effort to attain these, just as Jacob had put forth his efforts to attain the temporal blessings promised him. If adversity seems to go with us, and we meet with disappointments and more or less fraudulent conspiracy to take away from us our spiritual blessings, as Jacob met with disappointment which seemed for the time to interfere with his temporal blessings, we, like him, should patiently wait for the Lord, and trust and hope and labor on, knowing that the Lord will bring out the promised results in the end; knowing that he is on our part, and greater than all they that be against us.

7 We noticed in previous lessons the peaceable disposition of Abraham, and also of Isaac, and now we note that Jacob not only left home and abandoned his share in the father's house, and family property belonging to the birthright he had purchased; rather than quarrel with his brother, but that similarly in dealing with his uncle he refused to quarrel; he submitted himself; he trusted to the Lord to bring out the results rather than to his own strength for a conflict, either mental or physical. The Lord apparently would have the spiritual Israelites learn this lesson: "Seek peace and pursue it;" "Patiently wait for the Lord, and he will bring it to pass." It is not of God's arrangement that the spiritual Israelites should contend with carnal weapons; but rather that they should submit themselves to the powers that be, learning the lessons which accompany such submission; and have developed in them the faith, the trust, the hope in God, necessary to a maintenance of their relationship to him, and growth in his grace.

As Jacob and his caravan approached Palestine his confidence in God, and his reliance upon the Lord's promise to bless him, did not hinder him from taking a wise, generous, reasonable course for the conciliation of his brother. He did not stand upon his rights, and say: I purchased the inheritance, and was obliged to flee from it, and now I am differently situated, and will seek my first opportunity to take from Esau the cattle and substance which he received of my father's estate which are rightfully mine, and should there be any quarrel in the matter, let him look to his own side, for right is on my side and I may exert as much force as is necessary to obtain it. Quite to the contrary of this, Jacob said to himself: I care nothing for the earthly inheritance, I abandoned that all when I left home, and I do not intend to lay any claim to it, now or ever. I merely got what Esau did not appreciate, and now, if he can come to realize that I am not after the property, it will assuage his wrath, his malice, his envy. On the contrary, I will be generous to him; I will send him a valuable present, thus showing him that so far from wishing to take from him earthly goods I am disposed to give him more. Moreover, I will send such a message by my servants as will show him that I treat him as my superior—my lord, and that I rank myself as his inferior. He shall see that I am neither wishing to take the honors of his birthright nor its earthly emoluments, though all of these were purchased—I resign freely all of these temporal good things and honors, that I may have the Lord's favor, as represented in the original covenant with grandfather Abraham. He carried out his program successfully, and Esau became his friend. The lesson for spiritual Israelites along this line is.—We should not be sticklers for full justice and the last penny in earthly matters. Rather we may use the earthly mammon generously to make and keep the peace, and to forward our spiritual interests. Our readiness to do this will measure or guage our appreciation of the spiritual interests, in comparison to which earthly blessings, "Mammon" should be esteemed as loss and dross.

A Model Prayer.

Jacob's prayer at the time he was anticipating a meeting with Esau is recorded in this lesson, and may be considered one of the best examples of prayer to be found in God's Word. It is so full of confidence and trust in God. It recounts the original promise to Abraham, its renewal to Isaac, and its second repetition to Jacob at Bethel, and the Lord's promise there given him, that he would bring him again to his home country. It shows the humility of Jacob's mind, which cried out, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan [when fleeing from home], and now I am become two bands [great companies]." He tells the Lord of his fear of Esau, yet shows that his fear is offset by his confidence in the Almighty. It was at this time, and doubtless in answer to this prayer, that the angel of the Lord appeared to

Jacob, and so full of faith in the power of God, and in the promise of God was Jacob that he laid physical hold upon the angel, declaring that he would never let go until he got a blessing.

Here, the lesson proper, relating to Jacob's struggle with the angel, comes in. The angel appeared as a man, as was frequently the case in olden times; Jacob had recognized him, nevertheless, and laying hold of him urged that he as God's representative, sent to meet him, should give him a blessing. We cannot suppose for a moment that the angel was not powerful enough to release himself from the grasp of Jacob, and hence that the wrestling and struggle between them kept up until the morning light, the angel vainly pleading, "Let me go," and Jacob as persistently holding on and declaring, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." We must suppose, on the contrary, that the Lord was well pleased to bless Jacob, and had sent the angel for this very purpose; and that the circumstances were intended as an opportunity to draw out Jacob's longing desires in this respect; to demonstrate to himself how much he really desired the Lord's favor, the Lord's blessing. And when the desired result had been obtained—when Jacob had evidenced the intensity of his desire for harmony with God and such blessing as God alone could give—then the blessing came—Jacob's victory. Not that Jacob prevailed to get from God, through his angel, something the Lord was not pleased to grant; but that he prevailed to obtain the coveted blessing by manifesting the zeal, the energy, the patience, and the faith which God was pleased to see and reward.

The lesson of the spiritual Israelite in this circumstance is in harmony with our Lord's words, "Men ought continuously to pray and not to faint." God wishes us to be persistent, and our persistence measures and indicates the depth of our desires. If the blessing in answer to our prayer does not come in the moment of asking we are to continue "instant in prayer,"—patiently waiting for the Lord's due time, faithfully trusting him that he is willing to give the blessing which he promised, even though he may for a time withhold it with a view to our becoming the more earnest in seeking it.

Although Jacob was a natural man, not a "new creature in Christ Jesus," nevertheless his prayer is a model one, in that he did not specify even the earthly things which had been promised him. All he asked was a blessing, in whatever manner the Lord might be pleased to give it. Alas, how many spiritual Israelites seem to have a much less keen appreciation of proprieties in such matters than had Jacob! Many ask and receive not because they ask amiss, for things to be consumed upon their earthly desires—wealth or fame or temporal good things. (Jas. 4:3.) . . . The Lord has promised to take care of the temporal necessities of his spirit-begotten children, and to do for them better than they would know how to ask or to think. How few seem to remember that as new creatures our conditions and desires should be specially for the things that pertain to the new creature, and that it is this class of blessing the Lord invites us to ask for and to wrestle to obtain, assuring us that as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so our Heavenly Father is pleased to give the holy spirit to those who ask him. (Luke 11:13.) If the Lord's consecrated people could all be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! If, then, they should wrestle with the Lord until the breaking of the day their hold upon him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord has revealed himself to his people for the very purpose of giving them this blessing; nevertheless, he withholds it until they learn to appreciate and earnestly desire it.

Jacob got the blessing and with it a change of name. He was thenceforth called Israel, which signifies "Mighty with God." This new name would thenceforth be continually a source of encouragement to him, and incentive to fresh zeal and trust in the one whose blessing he had secured. All of Jacob's posterity adopted this name. They were all known as children of Israel, or Israelites; for God acknowledged the name as applicable to all of the nation. Similarly in antitype we have Christ Jesus our Lord, the true, the antitypical Israel, the one who, through faith and obedience to the Father, has prevailed, has overcome the world and the flesh and the Adversary, and has received the divine blessing as the result of his struggle. He has been highly exalted and is declared now to be prince or ruler of the kings of the earth. He has sat down with the Father in his throne.—Rev. 1:5.

Nor does the analogy end here; for, as Jacob had twelve sons, so our Lord Jesus had twelve apostles; and these, and all who come into Christ through their ministry of the gospel, are accepted as the true, the spiritual, Israel. The same name belongs to all of these that belongs to the Head. As with fleshly Israel there were some who were "Israelites indeed," and others who were not, but of the synagogue of Satan, in the spiritual Israel there are nominal and real Israelites; and only the latter will ultimately obtain the blessing and be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord. And the name, "Victor," or "Mighty with God," will be a name which will apply to everyone of the Lord's faithful ones in the same manner that it applied to Jesus himself. Each one will be required to manifest his loyalty to the Lord, his faith, his trust, and only those who love the Lord and the promise he has made that they will hold on to his promise, and will not let him go without a blessing—only such will receive the great blessing, only such will be able to overcome the world, the flesh and the Adversary. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"—in God and in his promises.

Acknowledging Divine Favors

Jacob had a method of marking the special manifestations of divine providence,—as when he called the place in which he wrestled with the angel Peniel; as a reminder that there he had been privileged to see, representatively, the Lord's face, to receive the Lord's blessing, the light of his countenance. Similarly, it is profitable to the spiritual Israelites that we should make note in some special manner of all the Lord's mercies and providences toward us. Many feel poor as respects the Lord's favor and blessing, simply because they have failed to let them make a proper impression upon their hearts at the time they were received. Divine favors are soon lost from our leaky earthen vessels unless special notation is made at the time, either upon the tablets of memory, or in some other manner to refresh memory. Doubtless we would all have more Bethels and more Peniels did we but follow the course of setting up some kind of monuments, and there entering into some special covenant or vow with the Lord in return for his mercies. Quite in line with this thought, that Christians generally have multitudinous blessings, and favors more than they fully recognize, the Church has for some years held meetings . . . for prayer, praise and testimony. And the testimonies called for are not the "years ago" sort, however good, but the fresh living experience of the **week**. And as each **seeks** for fresh evidences of divine love and watchcare daily, each finds that he has far more cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving and encouragement than he would have been aware of without such watchfulness and notations. Let us daily and weekly, as well as yearly rear to God our Ebenezers, if we would increase our faith and joy and love.

As Saul of Tarsus, in receiving his blessing of the Lord, received also a thorn in the flesh, which buffeted him continually through the remainder of his experiences, but which he learned ultimately to appreciate as a channel of divine blessing, as a reminder of divine favor, so it was with Jacob. At the very time that he was wrestling with the angel and getting the blessing, he received a wound, a troublesome reminder of the blessing, which continued with him probably through the remainder of his days, causing him to limp. The record is that the angel touched him in the hollow of his thigh, probably touched the sciatic nerve, causing the sinew to shrink and a slight dislocation of the joint. The lesson not only was one for Jacob himself to the remainder of his days, leading him to remember his dependence upon the Lord, and that he owed everything he possessed to the divine blessing, but it served afterward with his posterity as a continual reminder of the same thing; for the record is that thenceforth the Israelites would not eat of this sinew from any animal. Jacob's "thorn in the flesh," no doubt, served to keep him humble, even as Paul's served to remind him that he was what he was by the grace of God, and not in any wise of himself. Similarly, the Lord permits certain weaknesses of the flesh to affect his spiritual children in the present time **favorably**. Undoubtedly some of our difficulties and trials, physical as well as others, are amongst our greatest blessings, working out for us a better portion in the future, by working in us faith, patience, true reliance upon the Lord.—Z. '01:269-271.

7

The Temple of God

"For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." —1 Cor. 3:17.

THE usual Hebrew term applied to the Jewish temple was **heykal,** which signifies a royal residence. It was also often qualified by the term **kodesh,** sanctuary, to indicate its sacredness as the visible dwelling place of Jehovah among his people. The same significance also attached to the movable tent or sanctuary of Israel, the tabernacle in the wilderness. The idea thus visibly expressed was that God was in the midst of his people, as he said, "And there will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."—Exod. 29:43-45.

In fulfilment of this promise, as soon as the tabernacle was finished, the glory of the Lord filled it, as we read :— "So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. . . . The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys"—Exod. 40:33-38.

So also at the dedication of Solomon's temple there was the same divine recognition of this more permanent structure:—"So was ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, even the silver and the gold and the vessels did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord. . . . And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord."—1 Kings 7:51; 8:10, 11.

The idea conveyed by the several accounts of this glory of the Lord, as it appeared in the Tabernacle, in the Temple, on Mount Sinai, and as it guided and protected Israel in coming out of Egypt, is that of exceeding brightness, enveloped, and usually concealed, by a thick cloud, from which, on special occasions, it shone forth. Thus we read, "And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. . . . And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."—Exod. 24: 16, 17. See also 19: 9. 18. 19: 40:34. 35: 1 Kings 8:10, 11.

But the tabernacle and temple of God, built by divine direction and under the divine supervision, and thus honored with the visible, typical manifestations of the divine presence and glory, were only types of that grander tabernacle, not made with hands, of which fleshly Israel could have no conception, and of that holy temple which should by and by eclipse the grandeur of the earthly temple with all the gold and precious stones that adorned it. Let us, then, look away from, or, rather, let us look through, the typical temple of God to its antitype. The Apostles tell us that the Gospel Church, both individually and collectively, constitute the antitypical temple:—"For the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are."**

Considering the matter first in its individual application, we hear Paul say to the consecrated people of God, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? . . . Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them: and I will be their God and they shall be my people." (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16 Lev. 26:12.) Thus every faithful, consecrated child of God in whom God, by his holy spirit, dwells, is a temple of God, a royal residence of the King of kings, a holy sanctuary, this high privilege being ours through Christ, who first redeemed us by his precious blood, and thus made us eligible to the call of God to be thus sanctified and set apart wholly to his use—"for a habitation of God through the spirit."

It was to this that our Lord also referred, saying, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and **make our abode with him.** . . . The comforter which is the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14: 23, 26.) Thus each individual saint becomes "a habitation of God through the spirit," a holy temple, a royal residence.

How precious is the thought, how great the condenscension of our God in thus honoring his chosen ones who believe and trust in him and are fully consecrated to his will and service. "Ye are the temple of the living God;" and "ye are not in the flesh [in the old carnal condition], but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9.) And if the spirit of God dwell in us, it is to sanctify and glorify these temples of his, that even now we should show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

It is in this view of our relationship to God that Paul would impress upon our minds the sanctity of these temples of the holy spirit, saying, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy." That is, if, after he has been made a partaker of the holy spirit, and consequently, through the enlightening and guiding influences of that spirit, has tasted the good word of God and the powers [privileges of divine instruction, etc.] of the coming age, he should stifle all these blessed influences, refusing to be further led of the spirit of God, and turn again, either suddenly or gradually, to the spirit of the world, such a one is destroying his spiritual life—destroying the temple of God, which was holy and consecrated to God. And if such a one should hope thereby to have his portion in the coming age with the restitution class, let him quickly undeceive himself, for the judgment against all such is, "Him will God destroy." The Lord has "no pleasure" in any who "draw back" from such high privileges. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. . . . We are not of them who draw back **unto destruction,** but of them which believe to the saving of the soul."—Heb. 6:4-9; 10:38, 39.

It was in allusion to this same thing that our Lord, addressing his desciples, said, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it;" and that Paul also said, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Luke 17:33; Rom. 8:13.) It is to those who appreciate the sanctity of these temples of God that all the blessings of divine grace belong; for God shall dwell in them and walk in them, and his glory shall be manifested in them and to them. It is their blessed privilege, in reverent humility, to realize the condescending favor of God in recognizing them as his temples, and making his abode with them, and to profit by all the hallowed influences of his presence and favor. And if indeed these bodies of ours be the temple of the holy spirit; what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godlikeness? and how ought these mortal bodies to be quickened by his spirit that dwelleth in us? —quickened into active and diligent service and to the bringing forth of all the fruits of holiness.—2 Pet. 3:11; Rom. 8:11.

But while the saints are thus individually the temples of God, they also collectively constitute the great temple in which Peter likens each individual to a living stone, and Christ to the chief or foundation corner stone, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Paul also refers to this same thought, saying, "Ye are . . . of the house of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets [the foundation of hope in which they trusted, and which they pointed out to us], Jesus Christ [he] being a foundation corner stone of it; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple for the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the spirit."—Eph. 2:20-22.

The fact of the chief corner stone being also the foundation stone of this building, as well as the "head-stone," the crowning glory of it, as suggested by the prophets (Zech. 4:7; Psa. 118:22), calls to mind the form of the Great Pyramid whose top stone is the chief corner stone, and whose internal structure corresponds so perfectly with the Tabernacle and its symbolism. And further, if Christ be the chief corner stone, the top stone and also the foundation, as he surely is (1 Cor. 3:11), the manifest suggestion is that the foundation of this building of God is laid in the heavens, not on earth, and that all the other living stones built upon this foundation are drawn and cemented to it by heavenly and not earthly attractions. Yes, "ye are God's building"—"ye," both individually and collectively, consecrated sons of God, who have become the habitation of God through the spirit, ye are the temple of God. Howbeit, though now it is but a tabernacle in the flesh, and though in this tabernacle we often groan, being burdened, we know that when this tabernacle is destroyed we have a building of God, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—2 Cor. 5:1, 2.

Though the Church, like a tabernacle in the wilderness, is now a habitation of God, owned by him, and blessed by his presence, and filled with a large measure of his glory, yet enveloped, as it generally is, by clouds of trouble, etc., which hide the glory from others, except as occasionally manifested, it is not always to be a moving tent with its glory concealed. By and by her glory will be manifested without the enveloping cloud;—"She shall shine forth as the sun." (Matt. 13:43.) The prophet Isaiah joyfully anticipates that blessed time when the finished temple of God shall displace the present tabernacle, saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, . . . and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—Isa. 60:1-3.

What a hope is thus set before the faithful ones, who, as living stones, come to Christ to be built upon this foundation! From the eloquent imagery of prophets and apostles we catch the inspiration of that holy joy which shall be fully realized when all the living stones of the glorious spiritual temple of God shall noiselessly come together without the sound of a hammer—in the first resurrection, and when the headstone shall crown this glorious building of God, amid shoutings of "Grace, grace, unto it." (Zech. 4:7.) What tongue can tell or pen portray the glory to be revealed in the saints by and by, when the sacrifices of this day of atonement (the Gospel age) are all over? and what plummet can sound or line measure the wealth of blessing that will flow to redeemed humanity from the glorified temple of God?

But, aside from this inspiring theme, let us return to the thought which the Apostle would impress upon the minds and hearts of all God's people; viz., the sanctity of the temple of God,—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

If the spirit of God does not dwell in us, then we are not of the class addressed; "for if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And those who have that spirit are led by it in the paths of righteousness and truth. And not only so, but those who have and who are led by the spirit of God have therein an earnest or pledge of their future inheritance as the sons of God, as the Apostle tells us, saying, "After that ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."—Eph. 1:13, 14.

Yes, our present divine recognition as sons of God is the surest evidence we can have of his recognition when we shall have finished our course. If to-day we have his manifest approval and fellowship, and if these mortal bodies are quickened into loving, active zeal both to know and to do the will of God, we may also look forward with joyful anticipation to that blessed time when we shall see the Lord and be like him.—Z. '98:113-115.

The Divine Plan of the Ages in Brief

7

GOD proposed in himself before the foundation of the world the great Plan re Redemption, because he foreknew man's fall and the death penalty he would put upon it. For the first 1656 years up to the flood God permitted the holy angels to demonstrate their inability to recover the sinner to righteousness. On the contrary, the contagion of sin spread to some of the holy angels. As the Scriptures declare, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took unto them wives of such as they would. And there were born unto them children, which were giants and men of renown. (Gen. 6.) And the earth was filled with violence and sin—to such an extent that God declared that the imagination of the human heart had become only evil and that continually. Foreknowing this God had already arranged that one of the aqueous "rings," still suspended above the earth, should descend, causing the flood, which wiped out that order of things, destroying every human being, except righteous Noah and his family, of whom it is written, "Now Noah was perfect in his generation (there was no admixture of angelic seed).—Genesis 6:9.

Thus the angels were tested by contact with sin for centuries—so that all of those who desired had opportunity to transgress the Divine Laws. The disobedient ones are referred to in the New Testament as those angels who kept not their first estate or spirit condition, but who preferred to live on the earthly, animal plane. These were restrained in chains of darkness until the great Millennial morning—cut off from fellowship with God and the holy angels and no longer permitted to materialize and thus to commingle with humanity.—2 Peter 2:4.

When God's due time came he called Abraham to make of him a type of himself, and to give him a son, Isaac, to be a type of Christ, and to call for Isaac a Bride, Rebecca, who would be a type of the elect Church of this Gospel Age. And as with Rebecca came maids, so with the elect Church comes the "great company" class. As Abraham offered Isaac on the altar in a figure and he was recovered from death in a figure, so God really offered his Son in death and recovered him out of death actually by resurrection from the dead. As all that Abraham had he gave to Isaac, so it is that all the blessings that God has to give to all others of the human family who will become his people will come through the antitypical Isaac. And when Rebecca became Isaac's bride and joint-heir, she became sharer with him in all the joys and privileges which were his. Thus was represented the future glory of the Church with Christ in blessing all the families of the earth.

Moreover a double figure is used to represent The Christ, namely, Jesus the Head and the Church his Body. In the fulfilling of this figure the Apostle tells us that all of the consecrated overcomers are members of the Isaac class, saying, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." The Church as the Bride is pictured in St. Paul's statement, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise"— the promise that through us the world shall be blessed. —Gal. 3:29.

Abraham's Wives Typical

While the foregoing is a brief synoptical picture of the whole, the details of Abraham's life represent the details of the Divine Plan of the Ages. As Abraham had the promise that he should be the Father of many nations, it implies that eventually, many peoples of the world will become God's children—but only through Isaac and through the promise made respecting Isaac's work. Furthermore, the Seed of Abraham, it was foretold, would be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore. The stars of heaven represent the spiritual Seed of Abraham. The sand of the seashore represent the multitudinous earthly seed, the human family brought back to life during the Millennium, the result of the redemptive plan.

St. Paul gives us the key to the entire situation in the suggestion that Abraham's wives were typical of Covenants and this explains to us the seemingly harsh treatment of Hagar. Abraham was obeying Divine instructions, and the Divine instructions were so shaped as to constitute the matter in type a picture and lesson for our instruction. Abraham's first wife was Sarah. St. Paul explains that Sarah typified a fundamental promise, and her name, Sarah, signifies princess or chief one. This princess Covenant, the one upon which all the others depended for their fulfilment, is the one which fulfils its mission or purpose in the development of the spiritual Seed—Isaac—"We as Isaac was are children of the promise." This Covenant has nothing whatever to do with the development of any other children of God except through the Isaac class, the Mediator class, the great Prophet, Priest and King class, through which all of God's blessings are to descend to humanity.

Because Sarah was to serve as a type of spiritual things she was barren for long years, to teach that God's primary Covenant with Abraham would be barren (unfruitful) for long centuries. Meantime, in order to make another type, Sarah's bondmaid, Hagar, was given to Abraham for a wife, Sarah seeking to appropriate the child of Hagar as the Seed of promise—as her own. Hagar represented the Law Covenant made with Israel at Sinai, as St. Paul explains. The child or offspring of that Covenant was the Jewish nation, Israel in the flesh. The fact that Sarah sought to recognize Ishmael as her son and held Hagar in her arms at the time of his birth, implied that the Law Covenant with Moses as its Mediator would, for a time, seem to constitute Israel the heir of the original Covenant —which included the blessing of all the families of the earth. But this was not the Divine will.

Apostolic Explanation of Covenant Types

And so, in God's due time, Sarah brought forth Isaac, who typed the true heir of the Covenant or Promise. This birth of Isaac was represented primarily by the begetting of our Lord Jesus Christ by the holy Spirit to the spirit nature; and, later on by his resurrection to the perfection of spirit nature; and in a larger sense, as St. Paul explains (Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise), the birth of Isaac represented the begetting by the holy Spirit of the entire Church, which is the Body of Christ. Then came the persecution, the mocking of Isaac by Ishmael and the subsequent casting out from Divine favor of the Hagar or Law Covenant and her child, the Jewish people. They have been outcast for centuries and were about to die—about to lose their national identity, about to be absorbed by other nations, just as Hagar and Ishmael, after being cast out, wandered through the desert until they had eaten their loaf and had drank the water they had with them and Ishmael was ready to die. Then the angel of the Lord drew their attention to a spring of water in the desert and, after their refreshment, counseled their return and submission to the Divine arrangement—their recognition of the Sarah Covenant and spiritual Israel. We have come close to this very point of time now. The poor Jews, losing hope, were about ready to die, to give up all faith in the promises. But, behold, at the opportune time, a well-spring of hope revives them and the message to them is that there is a spiritual Israel and also a natural Israel and that their blessings are along natural lines and must come to them through the recognition of the glorified Mediator of a New (Law) Covenant.

The Apostolic explanation of this wonderful system of types stops here. And we would be inclined to stop here also, were it not that other Scriptures clearly point out that later on, after the death of the Hagar Covenant and after the principal Covenant shall have accomplished its purposes in the bringing forth of spiritual Israel, the antitypical Isaac, a New Covenant is due to be introduced "after those days"—after the interim of this Gospel Age specially set apart for the development of the antitypical Isaac. That New Covenant is referred to by St. Paul. When discussing this very subject he says respecting natural Israel's restoration to Divine favor, "This is my Covenant with them when I shall take away their sins: as concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. . . . . for as ye in times past have not believed God, but have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."—Rom. 11:26-32.

The same great Covenant, future for Israel, is referred to by the Prophet Jeremiah. (31:31.) Israel is there told that after certain days God will make a New Covenant with them, not the Siniatic Covenant—not the Hagar Covenant—and just as surely not the Sarah Covenant, which gives birth only to a spiritual Israel. The prophecies respecting that New Covenant are earthly, restitutionary. Under it, "after those days," God will take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh—he will make them tender-hearted human beings, loving, kind, etc. But he will not make of them spirit beings or New Creatures.

The Mediator of that New Covenant, Israel understood, will be a greater Mediator than Moses, though like unto him in the sense that Moses was the type or small fore-finger of him. Even so the Mt. Sinai Covenant, with Israel as the Ishmael class gendered thereunder, were typical of the greater blessings and upliftings to be accomplished by the New (Law) Covenant. For these reasons the Lord did not confuse the types by reinstating Hagar as Abraham's wife after the death of Sarah, as representing a renewal of Divine favor toward Israel and the use of natural Israel as the earthly channel of Divine favor and blessing to all the families of the earth. Instead, God permitted Hagar to cease as a type after showing her subserviency to Sarah and the recovery of her child, the Jew, from perishing. When Abraham, after the death of Sarah, took another wife, Keturah, we have every reason to believe that she, also, was a type and represented a third Covenant. And her many children represented typically the many people, kindreds and tongues of the world which will ultimately become, under the New Covenant arrangement, children of the Highest.

The Superiority of the Sarah Covenant

Nevertheless it should be continually borne in mind that in this series of types the Lord everywhere showed the superiority of the Sarah Covenant. In one sense of the word Sarah was Abraham's only wife, because Hagar and Keturah are mentioned merely as concubines. Thus the Divine Plan all centered in the promise, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Nevertheless the Jew and his Law Covenant have been used of the Lord as a supplementary means of blessing and instruction to the Church and to the world. Likewise in the future the blessings that will go to Israel and through Israel to the world under the New Covenant will all depend upon the first Covenant, the Sarah Covenant, the spiritual one and its spiritual Seed—The Christ, Head and Body. The New Covenant can go into effect as a better Covenant than the Mosaic one only by reason of having a better Mediator than Moses, "The Mediator of the New Covenant"—The Christ. And he will become the Mediator of that Covenant and put it into effect for the blessing of all through or by means of his "better sacrifices." First, the sacrifice of Jesus, the foundation of all reconciliation with the Father—"and we through him." Secondly, the Father's acceptance of the Church as members of the Body of Christ, upon the condition mentioned by St. Paul, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God." These are the better sacrifices which the great Mediator presents to Justice, all founded upon the merit of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. His merit will be shared in, through God's arrangement, by the "little flock," the Royal Priesthood, who not only by faith accept the Redeemer's merit, but who, by grace, also lay down their lives. They become dead with him, that they may also live with him and share his glory, honor, immortality, Kingship, Priesthood, Mediatorship, etc.

"Ah, these are of a royal line,
All children of a King,
Heirs of immortal crowns divine,
And lo, for joy they sing!

"Why do they, then appear so mean?
And why so much despised?
Because of their rich robes unseen
The world is not apprised."

—Z. '10:294, 295.

The Importance of Attaining Balance of Mind

"Let all your deeds be done in love."—1 Corinthians 16:14.—Diaglott.

GOD is the very personification of sympathy and love. As the Scriptures declare, "God is Love." And all who will be God's children, developed in His likeness, will be **loving** children. As St. John says, "He that dwelleth in **love**, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16.) In proportion as we develop strength of character as New Creatures, this quality of love increases. In addition, we should find our judgment also becoming more accurate. Those who are developed in the Spirit of the Lord have better judgment than they formerly had. As the days go by, they know better how to sympathize with the world; how to deal with mankind; they are getting more and more of the wisdom which cometh from above.

Careful Preparation for Kingdom Necessary

Before we became Christians at all, we may have been under-balanced, or over-balanced—we may not have known how to deal properly with our families or our friends. Out of kindness and sympathy we may have been inclined to give them money, or to yield to their wishes in a way that was injurious to them; or we may have been too severe and unyielding. But as we grow in the spirit of a sound mind, we learn better how to deal with others, so as to be in harmony with the Divine will, the Divine Spirit.

When we shall have experienced our change and have become like our Redeemer, all of our powers will be perfect. Our love, our conception of justice, and also our conception of how to deal with others, will then be perfect. Every one who does not develop this character of love, mercy, justice, etc., will be unprepared for the Kingdom work.

The next Age is to be a time of purification, of purgation, to the world; and those of the Lord's people who do not now have character enough to give necessary stripes are not worthy of a position in which authority must be exercised. On the other hand, those who would give too many stripes would not be fit to deal with mankind. Therefore we all need this balance of mind in order to be ready for the work of the next Age.

Proper and Improper Occasions for Anger

As we come to see that the whole race of Adam is fallen—some more, some less—we develop a sympathy for mankind. We grow compassionate. We desire to lift them up out of their degradation. We would like to help them as much as opportunity affords. Hence we are far from wishing to render evil for evil. We wish to be peacemakers as far as possible. Therefore, unless it would be injustice to refrain from speaking sharply, we should be careful that our words are kind and loving. However, even though our words might not be angry, there are times when sharp utterances might be helpful, but even these should be tempered with love; tempered with the spirit of the Master.

"Be Ye Angry and Sin Not"

There is a difference between anger that would be righteous indignation and anger that would be unloving, unkind, unjust. We know that God is angry with the wicked, for the Scriptures so tell us. (Psalm 7:11.) This fact shows us that anger of itself does not necessarily imply a sinful condition; for God has no sin, and He judges Himself by the same regulations under which He judges His creatures. Therefore anger in itself is not sin.

In God's case there is no danger that He will make a mistake and be angry with the right or approve the wrong, or that He will be lenient with the wrong and thus oppose the right. His knowledge is perfect; therefore His conduct is perfect. In our case, however, if we feel that anger is proper for us, we should use a great deal of discretion. As the Apostle Paul says: "Be ye angry and sin not."—Ephesians 4:26.

In a case where an innocent person is suffering wrong, and we have full knowledge of the matter, then it might be our duty to manifest anger, righteous indignation. It would be proper to manifest a certain degree of anger if we saw even a dumb brute mistreated. If we saw the principles of righteousness being outraged, it might become necessary to manifest some anger, some indignation.

But these cases would probably be very rare, for the circumstances would not often be a matter of our business. As St. Peter remarks, we are none of us to suffer as busybodies in other men's affairs. —1 Peter 4:15.

If we see a parent doing to his child something that is not right, we should not interfere unless the child's life is endangered. If it is merely a case of switching or a box on the ear, we must not interfere. It is not our business. Let us as the Lord's children, ambassadors of the King of Heaven, seek more and more to exercise the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of love and reasonableness.—Z. '14:77.

7

Nothing Too Good for God's Service

"If there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame or blind, or have any ill-blemish, thou shall not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God."—Deut. 15:21.

SUCH an injunction to the house of servants under Moses is, perhaps, more necessary to the house of sons under Christ (Heb. 3:5, 6), than many are apt to suppose. Inborn selfishness generally suggests that it would be a pity to sacrifice the best things, which could be used to advantage in so many other ways. And it is because this is generally done unconsciously that we now discuss this subject, with a view of helping the true-hearted out of the difficulty. Truly our hearts are exceedingly deceitful and require constant watching as respects their real motives, which they sometimes hide even from the loyal-hearted sons of God.

How often we have seen Christian parents, lovers of the Lord and his cause, who at times would bemoan their own inability to be actively engaged in the Lord's service, and who loved and admired the sacrifices of brethren and sisters, who, to their injury, held back their own sons and daughters. . . . They would accept the Lord's bounty and expend it upon their children to give them an education, and then point them to medicine or law or literature or school-teaching as honorable and remunerative fields for their talents and education.

What a great mistake! what a sad mistake! How ashamed they will feel, if they ever get into the Kingdom, when looking back they will see how lightly they esteemed the wonderful privilege of being coworkers with God in this present time! How vastly different will be their views then, respecting the **importance** of medicine and law and schools and literature and marriage! How ashamed they will be that they ever thought that the lean and the lame and the ill-favored were good enough to sacrifice to the Lord!—that none should think of it but those who had no capacity for "worldly prosperity!"

On the contrary the consecrated parent should consecrate to the Lord not only his firstborn, but all of his children; and from infancy should be instilling into their minds and hearts that the proper course for all of God's people is to devote themselves in largest possible measure to the divine service. They should be taught to regard all of life's affairs with a view to rendering their all to his service in any possible capacity; and to pray that the Lord would accept and use their time, talent, influence—all—in his service, the most honorable service imaginable, and ultimately to be the most highly rewarded. The Apostle's teaching respecting marriage (1 Cor. 7:27-40) should be brought to their attention with the thought of the Apostle that it is not a condemnation of marriage in others, but one of the incidental sacrifices of those anxious to be most fully used in the Lord's service.

Not only so, but the Christian parent who discerns present truth should encourage his child not to strive for the higher education, but to be content with a common school education; because (1) to qualify himself with a profession would be to put before himself a temptation in that direction which would last through life; (2) because the higher education of the present day in all colleges is so impregnated with the Evolution theory and Higher Criticism that the strong probability is that, like others, he would fall into skepticism, which will kill his devotion to the Lord, and he could only be induced to serve the Lord, even outwardly, by an honorable position and a good salary—if, indeed, it left him anything but morality as a substitute for religion!

On the contrary, every man and woman favored by the Lord with some knowledge of present truth should at once appreciate the true situation:—that the most talented and best educated have nothing worthy a place on the Lord's altar,—nothing worthy of acceptance in the Lord's service; and, forthwith, each should proceed to devote to it, daily and hourly, the **best** that he has and the **most** that he can, as being the greatest privilege that could ever be offered to angels or men—to be colaborers with God. . . .

Alas, how few of those who recognize their trusteeship are faithful to it and will be able to render their report with joy, and to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" . . .

Let us give a concluding word to some of the humble and small-talented ones who have engaged in this service. They may, perhaps, be inclined to feel that they are of the **blemished** class of ill-favored ones represented in our text as unacceptable. But not so, dear brethren; the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin—covers all our natural blemishes and makes us worthy and acceptable in the Beloved. A cipher alone has no value, but it is a power indeed, when it follows 1; and so it is with us when we follow Christ—his merit gives us association and co-operation with him; gives us weight and influence and power for God and his cause. "Ye are complete in Him;" "accepted in the Beloved."—Z. '03:52, 53.

"Vain Repetition" in Prayer

QUESTION.—In Matt. 6:7, our Lord tells us, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their **much speaking.**" The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church (Col. 4:2), exhorts that they "continue in prayer"; again we read of the widow who was heard for her importunity. (Luke 18:2-5.) Is this a suggestion that we should **importune?** How could we importune without repetition?

Answer.—We are to recognize a distinct difference between the "vain repetitions" of the heathen, which our Lord condemned, and the "continuing instant in prayer," "in everything giving thanks," in "praying and not fainting," acts which our Lord and the Apostles enjoined. (Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1, etc.) This difference the Lord illustrated in the case of the woman who came to a judge repeatedly, asking that he avenge her of her enemy. Although the judge was not a man who would act justly, yet he did her justice on account of her persistence. In commenting upon her course, our Lord said that if an unjust judge be moved on account of importunity to do justice, how much more a just judge!

The thought illustrated in the parable is that of a person who cries to the Lord that injustice is being done—as with the Church at the present time. We all realize that we are suffering injustice. We cry, "O Lord, deliver us! deliver us from the Adversary!" Will God never deliver the Church? For eighteen hundred years the Church has been praying thus; and God has not answered this prayer. Will He never answer? Our Lord intimates that we should not lose faith. We are to have full confidence in His promises. Injustice will not forever obtain. The time will come, we are told, when Satan shall be bound and deceive the people no more.—Rev. 20:2, 3.

Therefore we do right to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," week after week, year after year, century after century. To grow faint or grow weary in prayer would not be right. The proper course is to believe that God will fulfil what He has promised; and that all will come out in harmony with His will.

On another occasion our Lord gave a parable wherein one asked his neighbor for food and was refused. (Luke 11:5-8.) He asked again. Finally the neighbor gave it to him on account of his importunity, on account of his patiently persisting. This parable, also, emphasizes the thought of importunate prayer. God has the blessing, and not only is able to give it, but has promised to do so. The delay in granting the request is because His due time has not come. Hence we are not to give up nor to become weary, but to be constant in our prayers.

This is all very different, however, from the "vain repetitions" which our Lord condemned. But we do not think that our Lord desires us to use repetition in our prayers. Some people use the words, "Our Father," or "Our God," or "Heavenly Father" more frequently than would seem to be good form—even using them in every fourth or fifth sentence. Their prayer would sound better on earth if they did not use these repetitions; though, no doubt, the repetitions would be understood in Heaven; for these people seem to be as earnest as others.

Sometimes, after we have had morning worship and prayer, the one called upon to ask the blessing at table practically repeats the morning prayer. This course would imply that the person had forgotten that the general blessings had been asked in that prayer, and that he should be asking a blessing on the morning meal. To ask a blessing on the meal is not to pray in the ordinary sense of the word. Whoever "asks the blessing" should ask something in connection with the food and not attempt to pray for neighbors, relatives, etc.

But the repetitions which our Lord had in mind and which are specially reprehensible in the Lord's sight are formal prayers merely. To illustrate: the Chinese are said to have a praying wheel, which enables them to make many "vain repetitions" without the trouble of speaking a word.

It would seem that our Catholic friends also are given to a great deal of repetition in prayer. They repeat, "Hail, Mary!" and believe that God will save them from suffering in purgatory for their repetitions. Some of the poor creatures say, "Hail, Mary!" as often and as fast as they can.

So with the Mohammedans. They say, "Great is Allah! Mohammed is His Prophet! Great is Allah! Mohammed is His Prophet!" again and again. We do not know what good they are doing, for they are surely wasting a great deal of valuable time to no purpose. We do not wish to make light of these people nor of their conduct. But we are bound to think that with those who are intelligent such prayers are only form. With those who are not intelligent it is different. We believe that they are sincere; and so our course is to think sympathetically of them, but not to do as they do, not to pray as they pray. Prayer in private, in our own room, may be as long as we please; but prayer in public should be short and to the point.—Z. '12:147, 148.

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All should be on the alert to serve the Lord's cause at any moment and every moment. God's purposes will be accomplished, but happy is the man or woman or boy or girl accounted worthy of the privilege of any service to the Lord or to the least of his disciples. Let us, then, be continually on the lookout, in an inquiring attitude of mind, desirous of knowing the mind of the Lord in every matter.—Z. '09:298.

◇

We are to remember that every stewardship brings with it weighty responsibilities, and while such responsibilities are not to be shirked, neither are any of them to be undertaken lightly, without appreciating the fact that every one who becomes a servant of the household of faith has thereby a larger degree of responsibility, not only toward the household, but toward the Master of the house, from whom comes every commission. And every servant is to remember that unfaithfulness would surely lead to his removal, even as every manifestation of humble faithfulness on his part will endear him to the Master and to every faithful member of the household, and imply his continuance in the service until the Master shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord."—Z. '00:271.

◇

The Lord employs as little of the miraculous as is necessary—he takes advantage of conditions as they are so far as possible, and uses them. While, therefore, the Scriptures declare, and all the facts of the case correspond to show, that not many great, not many learned, not many wise, not many noble according to the course of this world are chosen by the Lord for his special servants, we are to assume that the Lord chooses as noble, as great, and as learned as he can find who are of the right condition of heart.—Z. '05:363-364.

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Bo Lewis Hankin

Old Corn Gems

No. 112

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"I Have Chosen Him"

1 Chron. 28:1-10.

Golden Text—"Trust in the Lord with all thy heart."—Prov. 3: 5.

IT was in King David's seventieth year, when it was evident that he was nearing the close of life that one of his elder sons, Adonijah, following the example of Absalom, attempted to seize the kingdom, evidently surmising or perhaps knowing that his father had already determined that Solomon, his younger brother, should be the successor to the throne. Under the Lord's guidance, Adonijah's plans were frustrated and Solomon was duly anointed and proclaimed King of all Israel before the conspiracy had hatched. Solomon at this time was about twenty years old, a very young man to succeed to the throne, but evidently the best qualified of all. Of his elder brothers Farrar says, "They were men of fierce passions and haughty temperament, and would be singularly unfitted to carry out the peaceful and religious designs which David wished to bequeath to his successor." King David had evidently been an over-indulgent parent, and, occupied with the larger affairs of the kingdom, he probably had neglected the training of his children in the ways of the Lord. Solomon, born after his legal marriage to Bathsheba, and at a time when the King's misguided course had brought him to a very humble position before God and man, and educated at a time when Absalom's rebellion had perhaps taught the King a great lesson, we may reasonably suppose that the education of Solomon and his younger brothers was along different lines from those previously pursued with their elder brethren. In line with this thought we find that Solomon's education was under the care of the Prophet Nathan and in every way characteristic of him.

Not content with his own appreciation of Solomon as the most suitable heir to the throne and the one approved by the Lord, the King gathered a great assembly of the chief men of the nation to, so to speak, ratify Solomon's appointment and anointing. These princes represented (1) the heads of the families, in the twelve tribes; (2) the captains of industry and their subordinate officers; (3) in a word he gathered all the influential representatives of the nation, civil, military, and commercial. This was evidently a wise course, and points a lesson to the Lord's people of the Church. It is not sufficient that those who serve the Lord's flock shall be sure that they understand the divine will in respect to the general interests of his work; it is expedient that they seek the co-operation of the entire congregation either directly or through their chosen representatives. David's assurance that God had chosen Solomon was a guarantee to him that the Lord would so overrule and influence the nation that they would gladly accept the divine choice. At the same time, the course would have been the wisest one in any event, because it is an element of human nature to prefer to be considered rather than to be ignored.

Notwithstanding the King's age and decrepitude, and the fact that it was usual to sit in such assemblages, he stood upon his feet as implying the importance of the matters to be dealt with. His salutation to the officers and representatives of the realm was a gracious one: "Hear me, my brethren, and my people!" King David was not evidently of the dictator class, and all noble men and women will appreciate him all the more because of this. Notwithstanding his greatness, his success as a soldier in establishing and enlarging the kingdom, and his eminence as a poet, and his evident favor with God, he was not by any or all of these things made haughty, domineering, tyrannical, but even in speech was a faithful, humble shepherd to the people over whom God appointed him. No wonder his name is reverenced to this day not only by the Jews, his countrymen, but by all who love the Lord and the principles of righteousness.

With full candor the King related to his princes his own desires for the glory of God and the nation in connection with the building of the Temple, and with equal candor he explained why the Lord rejected the work at his hands—because he had been a man of war and had shed blood. Herein we see a wide distinction between the character of our God and his Temple, and that of other gods and their temples. The gods of the heathen are gods of war and their mighty ones are their bloody ones. One is impressed with the same thought in connection with some of the homage given to war heroes in the nominal Christian church. For instance, in Westminster Abbey the names of generals and admirals and men of the world in general are almost the only ones made prominent. Nor was this an exceptional matter in David's case: we see the same principle pointed out in the Law. (Num. 31: 19.) Those who participated in battle were unclean and required purification for seven days before participating in the privileges of citizenship.

David called attention to the fact that the Lord had chosen him to be their King; that he had decreed that he should be their King forever—that is, that the kingship should be in the line of his posterity. He called their attention to the fact that the tribe of Judah was the tribe of royalty by divine appointment, and that in the tribe of Judah the house of Jesse had been chosen by divine direction through the Prophet Samuel, and that in the family of Jesse, above all of his sons, the Lord had chosen David to be King over all Israel. In this speech the King was not attempting to defend his position on the throne, for that was conceded by all the tribes; but he did wish that the people should recognize the matter in a still higher light—that it was God who was their real King, and that God had taken the supervision of the affairs of the nation and had ordered and directed matters up to that juncture. It is well that spiritual Israelites should refresh their memories similarly; that they should call to mind that God, who was the King of typical Israel, is specially the King of spiritual Israel, and that being our King the affairs of his Church are not left to chance or haphazard, but are, in their largest interests at least, under divine supervision and care. The Apostle points this out in respect to our Lord, the great High Priest, saying, "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God." So our Lord Jesus called not himself to a position of headship in the Church, but was evidently appointed to that position by the Father, as the Apostle declares, "God hath given him to be the head over the Church, which is his body."—Eph. 1:22, 23.

Likewise throughout the Gospel age we may be sure that the affairs of God's Church have not been overlooked by him—that at all times during this age he has had the care of the interests of his people, and has raised up for them such helps and teachers as he saw best. Similarly, we may know that he still has the supervision of Zion's interests, as the Apostle declares, "God hath set in the body the various members as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor. 12:18.) If this thought were more in the mind of the Lord's faithful they would be more on the lookout to note the will of the Lord in respect to the affairs of the Church—whom he sets and where. With this thought in mind the choice of elders would not be conducted along lines of earthly preference or family kinship or selfish ambition, but instead the Lord's preference, the Lord's choice, would be sought. And, so far as the Lord's mind would be discerned, none other than his choice would be recognized by any of his faithful ones.

David had no doubt whatever respecting the Lord's choice for his successor. How he knew the mind of the Lord on the subject we are not informed, but evidently he had assured Bathsheba years before that her son Solomon should fill the throne, and now he probably announced the matter, declaring that God had given him assurance that Solomon should build the great temple which King David had not been permitted to build, but for which he had accumulated great stores of gold, silver, iron, marble, precious wood, etc. The word of the Lord, "I have chosen him to be my son and will be his Father," we are not to understand as meaning that Solomon was lifted up from the house of servants, of which Moses was the head, and made a member of the house of sons, of which Christ is the head—"Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence of our rejoicing firm unto the end." According to the Scriptural record, the first opportunity for any members of the house of servants to become sons of God was granted at the time of our Lord's first advent, and in view of the fact that he had already made consecration of his life as man's redemption price. (John 1:12, 13.) Solomon was God's son in a typical sense—he typified God's great Son, the Christ.

That Solomon was a model young man at the time of his induction into the kingdom, is evidenced from the statement of verse 7: "If he be constant to do my commands and my judgments as **at this day,** I will establish his kingdom forever." Here again, however, we see how the Lord, while making certain definite promises sure to be fulfilled, attaches them to certain individuals only upon conditions of their loyalty to him. As a matter of fact we know that Solomon did not continue in divine favor, but was led astray by the dangers of his lofty position and forfeited for his posterity their share in the promise. Hence it is that our Lord is not of Solomon's line, but a descendant of another son of David, Nathan.

Having thus set forth the reasons guiding him to the anointing of Solomon as his successor in the kingdom, the King charges responsibility upon the chief men of the nation—that they should maintain their relationship to the Lord and his arrangements faithfully; that they should not only observe the commandments of the Lord as already understood by them, but that they should continually seek to know the divine will in all things. He points out that as a nation this would be necessary to them if they would continue to possess the goodly land of Palestine. We know that they did not continue faithful to King David's exhortation, and that as a result the goodly land was lost, first by ten of the twelve tribes going into captivity, and subsequently by the two tribes being transported to a foreign land as prisoners. Nevertheless, God's promise to David still stands sure, and, like the promise made to Abraham, can have its fulfilment only when the greater than Isaac, greater than David, greater than Solomon, the antitype of these, shall take the throne and inaugurate the Millennial reign.

Turning to Solomon his newly appointed successor, the King exhorted his son, "Know thou the God of thy father and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." Here knowledge is given its proper place. First, it is only in proportion as we come to know God [illegible] can properly trust him or faithfully [illegible] Christian's course should be [illegible] these respects. To the first knowledge [illegible] the first faith on that small knowledge [illegible] obedience following, come in God's order [illegible] knowledge, increased faith and increased [illegible] We are to remember, however, that the range of knowledge and faith is limited to natural things until the full consecration of heart is made and the holy Spirit received, because "the natural man receiveth not the things of God neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, which searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.

Solomon is exhorted to remember that God not only knows the outward things which man can see and of which they can imperfectly judge, but that he knows also the heart, the intents, the thoughts. The antitypical children of God need continually to have this in mind, for we walk by faith and not by sight. To us, too, the exhortation applies that we are to keep continually seeking the Lord if we would be continually finding him more and more precious, and that if we forsake him and break our covenant with him he will cast us off forever.

The last verse of the lesson refers to the typical Temple which Solomon did build as God's sanctuary. He was strengthened in wisdom and in power and did accomplish that work. The antitype of Solomon, the Christ, has been strengthened, has been faithful, has been an overcomer, has been approved of the Father. He already has nearly prepared all the living stones which will constitute the living Temple of God for the coming age, through which the divine blessing will be administered for the restoration of the groaning creation. The building of the house, the growing together of the living stones, is already in progress; soon the capstone will be brought on with shoutings of grace, grace, unto it!—Z. '03: 426-428.

A Friend in Need---A Friend Indeed

1 Samuel 20.

"A friend loveth at all times."—Proverbs 17:17.

HISTORY records noble examples of friendship; but supreme amongst these is the story of our lesson—the friendship, the love, of Jonathan, son of Saul and prospective heir of the throne of Israel, for David, his rival in the hearts of the people and in the Divine Program. The purity and unselfishness of his friendship demonstrates to us a nobility possessed by some in those days, which we might not have suspected and which is quite in conflict with the Evolution theory.

The loving spirit of Jonathan stands out all the more in contrast with the jealous spirit of his father, King Saul. Apparently his first meeting with David was after the latter's victory over Goliath. Instead of thinking of David as a rival, who should be crushed, the noble Jonathan took off his own princely robe and gave it to him, together with his sword and his famous bow.

Rev. Alex. Whyte remarks, "Jonathan was the eldest son of Saul; and he was thus the heir-apparent to the throne of Israel. Handsome and high-mettled, full of nerve and full of heart, Jonathan was the pride of the army and the darling of the common people. His comrades, for his beauty of person and swiftness of foot, were wont to call him The Gazelle. But for his father's great and disastrous transgressions, Jonathan might soon have been the second king of Israel, second in succession to Saul, but second to no king that ever sat on a throne in those great qualities of mind, heart and character that give stability to a throne and add lustre to a crown."

Well was it written by one of the ancients, "Life hath no blessing like an earnest friend"; and a poet has written:

"Life offers no joy like a friend;
Fulfilment and prophecy blend
In the throb of a heart with our own—
A heart where we know and are known."

"A Friend in Need, a Friend Indeed"

Jonathan's friendship, love, was not of the effervescent kind. It was the genuine article. He did not love merely in word, but in deed and in truth—not merely when his father favored his friend and when the public acclaimed him and when he would thus have favor with others; but he loved him just the same when the king became the enemy of his friend and sought his life. Indeed, it may be said that no friendship could be surely counted upon until after it has been tried. The friendship which will not endure trial, testing, the friendship which will make no sacrifices is not the kind to be modeled after.

Jonathan had love of the kind the Lord admonishes His followers to have—the love which in honor prefers one another. While other loves have been great, this one doubtless stands preeminent above earthly love, especially because it was founded on a religious basis. It was because David loved the Lord, and sought to be guided by His will as that will was manifest at that time, that he would wait—that he conducted himself with wisdom, as the record declares. And it was because Jonathan discerned this spirit of wisdom, because he realized David was guided by the spirit of righteousness, that he loved David.

Indeed, we may be sure that in proportion as we understand the Bible and receive the spirit of the Truth, in that same proportion we shall be able to appreciate and to copy and to exemplify the best there is of principle—whether of friendship, or of duty to a monarch, of duty to our family relationship, or of duty toward our God. There are many influences operating toward a spirit of selfishness, avarice, jealousy, while the influences making for true friendship, true love, all the best qualities of heart and head, are from the Lord.

. . . . Today's lesson brings to our attention an occasion on which Jonathan acted the part of a true friend. David realized that his life was in danger and mentioned his fears to Jonathan. The latter was at a loss to believe that his father would break his word, yet was impressed by David's attitude. The feast of the new moon was at hand; and David was expected to sit at the royal table, King Saul at the head, Prince Jonathan at the right hand, the captain of the host at the left, and David occupying the fourth place, opposite the king. In harmony with an arrangement made between the friends, Jonathan was to ascertain his father's intentions definitely and to communicate these to David.

On the first day of the feast the king said nothin, although Jonathan, to attract attention to the matter and thus to draw out his father, chose a convenient time for taking David's seat. Finally the king asked for the "son of Jesse," as though he hated the very name "David." Jonathan replied that David had gone to keep the feast at Bethlehem by his permission.

The king had apparently been foiled in his intention to kill David at this time and vented his wrath upon his son, whom really he greatly loved. He addressed him as an unruly son, unworthy of his mother, thus implying that he ignored him as his own son. In his anger he threw a javelin at his son, probably not with the intention of striking him, but merely of venting his ferocious jealousy. Jonathan's speech in return shows that he was thinking less of what he himself was risking for his friend and more in respect to the injustice being done that friend. "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because Saul had done him shame."

It is a beautiful friendship which in stress forgets self and thinks only of the interests of the friend. As though in contrast with all the human loves and friendships, we read of Jesus, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Nevertheless, in the case of Jesus, it meant more than any earthly love or friendship: for "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The Apostle declares that the Lord thus set an example to all Christians, that they should "lay down their lives for the brethren," be ready to die the one for the other. This is the Heavenly love, the Divine friendship, of which the love of Jonathan may be taken as a sample, next to the example of our Lord and the Apostles.

"Is It Not Beyond Thee?"

The next morning David, having returned from his home, was to get Jonathan's judgment respecting the king's sentiments. The agreed-upon signal was that Jonathan with his bow and arrows should go into the field near to a great rock: and in connection with his archery would call out, "Is it not beyond thee? Make haste!" if the message was that David should flee. And so it was done. But the two friends could not think of parting, perhaps forever, without having personal contact. Jonathan went over to the rock behind which David hid. The two embraced, after the manner of the East, kissing each other Goodbye—true lovers, with a manly, noble love.

Here it was that Jonathan indicated his faith in God's providence in respect to David, and asked him to make a covenant with him that whatever should occur he would deal graciously with him and his family, saying, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, forever. And he arose and departed; and Jonathan returned to the city."

Bible history shows us that David never forgot the obligation he thus undertook to be a friend to the family of Saul. The custom of the East at that time was that a new dynasty coming into power should utterly destroy all the males of the dynasty which was being overturned. But this was not so in David's case.

It was on the occasion of Jonathan's death with his father on the field of battle shortly after, in conflict with the Philistines, that David expressed the beautiful words:

"O Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain!
I am distressed for thee, my Jonathan, my brother!
Pleasant hast thou been to me exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love
of women!"

We trust that none can read this story without being influenced favorably toward friendship, to be a truer, a nobler, a more faithful friend than otherwise; but especially should Christians get a blessing from this story of Jonathan's love, leading on as it does to the love of Christ and to the injunction that they should be copies of God's dear Son; and that their friendship should be loyal, true, enduring, especially one for the other, as the Apostle exhorts, "Doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the Household of Faith."—Z. '15:106, 107.

Who May Fall From Grace

ONE who is down cannot fall. Originally Father Adam was up; that is to say, he was perfect, created in God's likeness, free from sin. He was in God's favor, and while in that condition, he was on trial for life or death. He sinned and fell from favor into disfavor — condemnation, death. His posterity, the whole human race, have been born in God's disfavor. They are fallen. As we read, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psa. 51:5.) By nature mankind are all children of wrath. They cannot fall any further down; for as it is written, "The whole world lieth in the Evil One."—1 John 5:19.—Diaglott.

But something occurred which has raised a portion of the race of mankind from the fallen condition. Christ came into the world, gave His life a Ransom-price, and ascended into heaven "to appear in the presence of God." (Heb. 9:24.) Thus far, however, He has appeared only for us, not for the world, but for all those who have trusted in the precious blood of Christ. His appearance for these enables them to approach God, to become disciples of Christ. . . .

This is the attitude in which we stand: we have accepted the Redeemer, we are seeking to walk in His steps, we are lifted up out of condemnation, we are no longer dead in Adam. "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1, 2.) Once we were strangers and foreigners, but having been "made nigh by the blood of Christ" we are now . . . children of God by adoption.

After Adam had fallen, he was regarded as an enemy of God. But we have come near to God through Christ. We are "accepted in the Beloved," accounted worthy of life everlasting, if we are faithful; for eternal life is the gift of God. (Eph. 1:6; Rom. 6:23.) The Church, then, have come back from the fallen state; but the world **remains in that condition** and, therefore, **cannot fall.** The only ones who can do so are those who are the recipients of the Holy Spirit.

The manner of life here during the present existence may indeed affect the opportunity and future destiny of the world. If they knowingly violate obligations, they sin against light and they injure their characters; but they cannot sin away their share of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, for they have not yet received that share. Only the consecrated children of God are in the position to do so; as the Apostle points out. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance." —Heb. 6:4-6.

This thought will well bear repetition: The only class that can fall away are those who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit; but if any of those who have been brought into full harmony with God, . . . neglect or misuse their blessed privilege, there remains for them no more an interest in the great Atonement; **because they have received their portion** in Christ's redemptive work.

Knowledge Brings Responsibility

The only evidence there is at the present time that we have received the Holy Spirit is the fact that we have "received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15.) The world, having had no life in them, cannot lose what they never possessed. But as for us, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden the Son of God under foot and hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?"—Heb. 10:26-29.

Only those who have been sanctified through the blood of the Covenant can do despite to it. Only those who have a knowledge of the Son of God can "trample Him under foot." The world in its ignorance cannot do these things. So, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth" (not if **the world** sin wilfully, but if **we** sin wilfully), there remaineth no longer a share for **us** in the sacrifice of Christ.

For the others, there would still remain their share in the sacrifice of Christ, and their responsibility will be in proportion to their knowledge. **We have large responsibility, because we have large knowledge.** We have tasted of the Holy Spirit, we have been made partakers of it. The Apostle says that "those who despised Moses' Law died without mercy." There was nothing more for them then. They did not get eternal torment for disobedience to Moses, but theirs was the death penalty. Those who thus died will, nevertheless, have their share in the redemptive work of Christ.

Those who died under the Law will eventually have an opportunity to receive God's grace in Christ Jesus. But if **they** were cut off from life under the **typical** penalty of death, how much more severe would the penalty be upon those who have the understanding and enlightenment through the antitypical Moses—Christ! The intimation of the Scriptures is that such will die the Second Death for wilful disobedience. For such there is no hope of recovery whatever. Let this solemn thought be made emphatic. There will be a recovery from the death by Moses' Law. But for those who die the Second Death, there will be nothing further. They have had their share in the Atonement. They have counted the blood of the Covenant with which they were sealed an unholy thing. **"Christ . . . dieth no more!"**—Rom. 6:9.—Z. '12:278, 279.

Characteristics of a Sound Mind

Br. Homer

"God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—2 Tim. 1:7.

In this text St. Paul is addressing the children of God—those who have left the world, who have turned their backs upon the things of sin and selfishness, who have made a full consecration to God and to whom the Advocate has imputed His merit. They have received of His Spirit, the new mind, and so have the spirit of a sound mind.

In the beginning of the Gospel Age there were marked manifestations of the Holy Spirit, known as "the gifts of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4-11), such as knowledge, healing, miracles, tongues, etc. These gifts were bestowed at that time for two reasons; first, to witness who were God's people; and second, to confirm the faith of the early Church. They were necessary that the Church might have a start, so to speak.

The Apostle says that these miraculous **gifts** were to continue only for a time, but that the **fruits** of the spirit were to abide—meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, faith, hope and love, the greatest of all. (1 Cor. 13.) The gifts of the Spirit died out with the death of the Apostles, and of those also upon whom they had conferred the gifts. But the fruits and graces remain to this day.

Just as soon as we have received the Holy Spirit a transforming work begins with us. But in general the reception of the Spirit is at first without marked manifestation. We **grow** in knowledge, love and all the fruits of the Spirit, in proportion as we have received the Holy Spirit, which is given in order to develop our minds and hearts and to do a transforming work, bringing forth the fruitage of the spirit in our characters and our lives. With some of us the fruitage develops rapidly; with others, slowly.

The grape-vine gives us gifts in that it bears grapes. As fruit-bearing in nature is in one sense of the word a miracle, so also are the fruits and graces of the Spirit which show in our lives, but which are such a gradual development that they do not seem to be miraculous. . . .

Fear a Form of Selfishness

In our text the Apostle is discussing the character of this Spirit which God has given us. It is not the spirit of fear, not the spirit of dread, not the spirit of timidity. Where the spirit of selfishness goes, there is more or less fear accompanying it. We can realize that with our first parents the spirit of fear led them to hide themselves from the Lord. We recall that Cain feared and fled. (Gen. 3:10; 4:14.) So all down through the ages, the spirit of fear has exerted a powerful influence upon mankind. If a storm comes up, many people act as if they feared that it was something sent especially after them.

All fear, being a manifestation of one form of selfishness, is made up of the elements of self-love. People fear lest they may lose some of the things which they selfishly desire to retain. The spirit of many of the heathen as well as of many in Christian lands is a spirit of fear. They are serving God, not from a desire to be co-laborers in His work, but from fear. They have been taught that they ought to go to Church. They know not what God might do to them if they were to neglect to go. Some ministers have said, "If I believed, as you do, that there is no eternal torture, I would do all the wicked things imaginable." They show by these words that they are not impulsed by a Holy Spirit, but by a spirit of fear, a spirit that belongs to sin. The spirit of fear does not come from God.

There is, of course, a holy fear—a fear to do anything to offend God or to offend a friend. And we ought to be afraid of offending a friend, afraid of hurting or injuring a friend or anybody. If we love our Heavenly Father, we ought to fear to do anything to displease Him.

In Hebrews 4:1 the Apostle says, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Let us not fear evil—but let us fear lest we fail to attain the blessings promised to the overcomers. God will give those blessings only to those who reach a certain development of character. But the fear of the world is wholly improper. If any of the Lord's people have that fear, they have received it from some other source than the spirit of Truth.

Transforming Influence of the Holy Spirit

The Apostle proceeds to tell us what this Spirit of the Lord has brought to us. It has been a spirit of power, of strength. All who are seeking to walk after the Spirit and have a knowledge of the Lord's love—these He will not forsake, but will deliver them from evil. These have a courageous spirit, or influence of mind proceeding from this spirit of power. It gives them such energy that they are able to do more than otherwise they could. They astonish themselves. They have the peace of God to work in them to will and to do His good pleasure.—Phil. 2:13.

Those who receive the Truth are very different from what they were before they had received its spirit; and as a rule their neighbors and friends discern the change. Where a wife comes to the knowledge of the Truth, her husband is often surprised to find how much more firmness she has for everything that is right. This firmness is not a spirit of arrogance, but a spirit of assurance that God is able and willing to work things together for good. It is the same with the husband. Many wives have seen how much the Truth has strengthened the husband. This change is due to the spirit of power which the Lord has given His people. In proportion as we get this spirit, we get this power. Of course, some characters are naturally strong, but the Truth will make them stronger. Others naturally weak are made so much stronger that they surprise their friends and neighbors.

All who have been in the School of Christ seem to make like development. They become better people than they have ever been before. They are not necessarily better looking, but the Spirit of the Lord helps them to keep their clothes tidy and neat. It helps them to be more particular as to what they say and how they say it. It influences their words, actions, conduct—everything. It makes them more patient, brotherly-kind. All these qualities are manifested increasingly. . . .

We receive the spirit of love also. The Apostle says that the Spirit of God is the spirit of love, because "God is Love." (1 John 4:8.) God's Spirit is God's mind, God's disposition, God's influence. Since God is love, His Spirit must partake of all the qualities which go to make up love.

In proportion to the measure of the Holy Spirit which we have, we shall have love—first, toward God; secondly, to the children of God; thirdly, to our neighbors and friends, and lastly it will extend even to our enemies. It would lead us to be considerate of birds and beasts also. The spirit of love has a generally benevolent influence. Whatever affects the thoughts is sure to affect the words. Whoever has the spirit of love will manifest its influences and will become more loving and more lovable as that spirit increases.

Disregard for the Rights of Others a Form of Selfishness

Finally, the Apostle brings in the spirit of a sound mind. Man was created with a well-balanced mind. Adam and Eve did not need an outward record of God's Law. They had the sense of right and wrong so well defined in their minds that they knew right from wrong intuitively. But when they fell, they lost this balance of mind.

As we come down the centuries from their day to ours, we find that this keen sense of right and wrong has become dull. Thus in cannibal lands the inhabitants believe it right to eat each other. They think that if they feed on enemies who are strong, they will be made strong. This utter disregard for the rights of others is the spirit of selfishness. We see this spirit manifested in civilized lands also, where they do not eat up the enemy literally, but eat up his fortune, his reputation. . . .

In proportion as we get the spirit of love, we get the spirit of a sound mind. This spirit leads us to consider what is right and what is wrong, in all the affairs of life. Not only have we the spirit of the Law, but in addition we have the spirit of the Lord to instruct us. The Law says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." The spirit of the Law says that we shall not permit wealth or anything else to take away our minds from the Lord. We today find people worshipping bonds, stocks, giving the best of their time to the worship of Mammon. They do not know what they are doing. . . .

They say of us that we are of unsound mind because we care for the better things, the heavenly things. So they said of Jesus, "He hath a devil and is mad." (John 10:20.) As the Apostle said, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God." (2 Cor. 5:13.) Others think it strange that we run not to the same excess of riot. (1 Peter 4:4.) And it is true today that whoever will live godly will be misunderstood, slandered. (2 Tim. 3:12.) But it is for us to show our courage, our faith and our loyalty to the Lord and to manifest His Spirit "of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.) . . .

The spirit of a sound mind is a most wonderful manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's people. It gives them much advantage every way over the remainder of mankind. It sees in the present life opportunities for the attainment of character. It deepens the mind along all good lines. It makes one less touchy in respect to his own rights, privileges and preferences, and more considerate of the rights and feelings of others.

The spirit of a sound mind makes one's judgment clearer, truer, more trustworthy than before, for it impels him to accept the instructions of the Word of God in respect to what he should and should not do, and to reject his own faulty judgment. The meek will he guide in judgment. Whatever may be the imperfection of mind and body resulting from the fall, those who receive the spirit of a sound mind are thereby made purer, kinder, gentler, less selfish and more thoughtful in regard to others. Those who are thus rightly exercised will develop the spirit of love increasingly until that which is perfect shall have come and that which is in part shall have been done away. —1 Cor. 13:10.—Z. '12; 279-281.

"God Manifest in the Flesh"

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels."—1 Timothy 3:16.

GOD, the great Origin, or Fountain of Life, is pleased to manifest Himself in various creations. And all of His intelligent creations which He recognized as sons, were of His likeness. The Logos, the beginning of God's creation, was in the Divine likeness. Not only was He a spirit Being (and God is a spirit), but more than this, He was a spirit Being in the character-likeness of His Father, His Creator.

Moreover, when the Logos became the active Agent of the Father in creating the various orders—angels, cherubim, seraphim—they were all created in the image of the Father. The angel sons of God sang together and shouted for joy as they saw the different creations. When it came time to make a still different order of creatures, an order that had never before existed: namely, human beings, God carried out through the Logos, His purpose of creating man in His own image, His own likeness. And God declared Himself well pleased with man.

A description of the first man is given us in the Eighth Psalm: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea." Adam was the master, or king, of all these. He represented something that the angels did not represent; for none of them were ever set over anything. God Himself is Ruler of all things, and Adam and the Logos were the only ones who were in any sense of the word **set over** anything.

When God made man, He made him like Himself in this particular—that he had a **dominion.** When the angels were created, they were God manifest in different orders of beings—cherubim, seraphim and the lower orders of angels. When it came to the creation of **man,** he also was made in God's image. God was manifest in **flesh.** But we cannot say that God is manifest in the flesh now. The original likeness to God has been obliterated by sin. The reign of Sin and Death has to a considerable extent erased these traces of God's image. And the Scriptures plainly show us that we have lost this image and likeness of the Creator.

Adam was called a son of God because he was in covenant relationship with God; but when he became a sinner, he lost this relationship. None of the Jews were sons of God. Abraham was styled a **friend** of God. Although God had approved of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets and others in Israel, and indicated that a great blessing would be theirs, they could not be treated as **sons.** God said, in substance, when speaking to Abraham, My **friend,** I will show to **you** My Covenant. "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

God Manifest in Perfect Humanity

Everything must wait until that great antitypical Seed of Abraham should come. We have the record of how this One would come who was to be the Deliverer, the Antitypical Seed of Abraham. After reasoning about the Logos—how He was made flesh and dwelt amongst men—St. John declares that Jesus had the glory of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace, full of truth. This was the way above all others in which God was manifest in the flesh.

When the lower animals saw Adam, they saw the very best representation of God possible to them. Nothing could be made in the flesh that would be more like God. And when the time came for God to send His Son into the world, He set before Him the great privilege of being man's Redeemer. And when He was made flesh, all those who beheld Him saw the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father. When any looked upon Him, they saw the Father in the most absolute sense in which it would be possible for them to see Him.

God said to Moses, "No man shall see My face and live." Saul of Tarsus merely had a glimpse of Jesus glorified, and yet the glory was so great that if he had had a full look he would not have lived. Jesus **was** the express image of the Father. Jesus **is** the express image of the Father. And if no man can see God and live, then he cannot see Jesus and live.

God Manifest in the Princes

But God has made a provision that when Christ's Kingdom shall be established amongst men, there will be earthly representatives through whom Messiah will govern and uplift mankind during the thousand years. God has just such a class prepared and ready for this work — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the other Ancient Worthies. These are to be counted worthy of an instantaneous change to human perfection. These experience no change of nature in their resurrection, because they were not begotten of the Spirit. There was no one begotten of the Spirit until Pentecost, except our Lord at Jordan. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Therefore those Ancient Worthies had merely the testimony that they pleased God. Because of their loyalty to God and the principles of righteousness, some of these Ancient Worthies were stoned; some were sawn asunder; some were tempted; some were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy."—Hebrews 11:37-40.

These, although they had received God's Promise, received not the things promised them. For instance, God had promised Abraham, "All the land which thou seest will I give unto thee." Abraham must have a resurrection in order for God's Word to come true. **He must get that land.** But there was no suggestion to Abraham of glory, honor, and immortality—no suggestion to him of becoming a partaker of the Divine nature and a joint-heir with Jesus. See Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:17-19.

This change of nature began with Jesus. Christ has brought to men not only the knowledge of life and immortality, but also that there is a privilege of gaining this life with Him: "Which salvation began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3.) But the Ancient Worthies had the faith to **believe God, to trust His Promise** and to **wait** for the **fulfilment** of that Promise. They merely had the intimation that God would roll away the curse. And Abraham's Seed was to be the glorious channel of God's blessing—"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So St. Paul tells us that they received not the things promised them, "God having provided some better thing for us [the Gospel Church], that they without us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11:40.

The Ancient Worthies cannot get their blessing before we get ours. The Bride must be glorified before any of the faithful of the past can come in and get their blessing. Then forthwith the Kingdom will be established. And then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the other Worthies will be the first children of Christ. Instead of being the **fathers,** they will be the **children,** and He will make them princes, rulers, in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16.) Being resurrected perfect men, they will be the perfect images of God. In each one of these Worthies God will be manifest in the flesh. They will be princes at that time and rule the earth, under Christ's Kingdom.

Jesus corroborated this thought when He said, "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 13:28.) Of Himself He said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me **no more.**" (John 14:19.) If we should not be changed to spirit-conditions by the power of our resurrection, we would not see Him any more than will others who will continue on the human plane. The dead in Christ rise first (1 Thessa. 4:16, 17), and those "who are alive and remain," will, at His manifestation, be made like Him, be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." At the moment of our change we shall see not only our Lord, but all the holy angels, all on the spirit plane, who are now invisible to us. They can see humanity, but humanity cannot see them.

God was manifest in the flesh; first in the case of Adam; second in the case of Jesus; and third, He will be manifest in the flesh of those Worthies, who will be reckoned deserving of a better resurrection than the rest of the world.

Our Lord's Beauty of Holiness

When in derision the soldiers placed upon the head of our Lord a crown of thorns and arrayed Him in a purple robe, and led Him into the judgment hall, Pilate looked upon Him in admiration, and exclaimed, "Behold the Man!" or (see Strong's Concordance) "Behold the countenance!" I am a Gentile and not of your race. But here you have sent to me for sentence the most glorious Jew on earth! None can have a really beautiful character without the inner beauty being reflected in the face. If a man be a vicious character, he cannot hide it from his features. If he be of a loving disposition, it will show in his face. What then, shall we think of our Lord! His face must have been one of marvelous beauty! No wonder the people flocked to see Him because of His graciousness of speech and His wonderful beauty — the image of God!

The Psalmist has asked, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest [carest for] him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:4, 5.) But man has fallen into sin, alienation, darkness! The Satanic influence works sin and has brought about man's fall from the image of his Creator. It is God's great purpose to bring humanity back from sin and imperfection. He will uplift all those who desire to be righteous.

"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [the perfection of human nature]; that He by the grace [favor] of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9.) We see the broad basis of God's plan laid in the redemptive work at Calvary. We see that it must be the Redeemer's life that would be the price of human redemption. "For since by **man** came death, by **man** comes also the resurrection of the dead. For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ [The Anointed, The Messiah], the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His Coming [Greek, during His **presence**]." (1 Corinthians 15:21-23.) Jesus says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection." Such shall be kings and priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

So, then, "God manifest in the flesh" was clearly exhibited in the Man Christ Jesus in His perfection. But God was specially and more particularly manifest in the flesh of Jesus when He presented Himself to John at Jordan as He reached the period of thirty years of age, and there gave Himself sacrificially. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." There He offered Himself without spot, in harmony with God's will. And the Divine acceptance was indicated in the form of a dove coming upon Him—not that the Holy Spirit is like a dove, but that God gave the outward manifestation so that John would have some means of identification of the Messiah, so that he could say, "I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him."—Z. '15:309-319.

The Ministry of Angels

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."—Psalm 34: 7.

THERE is more or less difficulty associated with all attempts to think about the great Jehovah, His character and His power. The Scriptures seem to indicate that God has used various ways of manifesting His power to His people—to the Jews during the Jewish Age and to the Christian Church during the Gospel Age. We think it would not be an improper thought that the word **angel** may stand for any agency or power, whether animate or inanimate, that God would be pleased to use in connection with service. God could make the wind or the flaming fire His messenger. He could make the great Archangel or an inferior angel His messenger. He could use as His messenger whatever or whomsoever He might choose to invest with the requisite power; just as a representative of the United States, going to another country, would be recognized, regardless of his own personal ability or standing.

The details of how the Almighty has knowledge of our prayers, our thoughts, our words our needs, are not furnished us in the Scriptures; and evidently it is not necessary, therefore, that we should understand these in every particular. We do not think that any finite mind could comprehend God. He is too great for our comprehension, far too mighty for us to understand fully all His powers, His ability. Nevertheless we can apprehend some things respecting God, and are therefore invited in the Scriptures to study Him along the lines of His Revelation. To assume that God is in every place, in every niche of space throughout the Universe, seems to us an absurdity, not taught in the Bible; and to assume that God knows about every little tadpole, pollywog, microbe, or that He even takes knowledge of every act of each one of the human family, when there are millions upon millions of these, is beyond our understanding. . . . His general knowledge of matters would not imply that he would be in every room in the house at one instant nor take notice of every person at the same instant.

In our present text, however, we are inclined to think that the word "angel" used by the Psalmist refers to spirit beings. Our reason for thinking so is that the revelations of the Lord in olden times previous to Pentecost were nearly all by spirit beings. These materialized and then dematerialized, vanishing from sight. In general the Scriptures seem to indicate that God's dealing with His people in those earlier times was through angels. As respects the Gospel Age, we have confidence that God has shown as great care in His dealings with Spiritual Israel as He did with Natural Israel; for Spiritual Israel comes nearer to Him as His House of Sons than did Natural Israel as a House of Servants. But God expects the House of Sons to walk by faith and not by sight, a much higher walk. Hence His manifestations to these are not such as appeal to the natural senses. They are, nevertheless, just as real.

The Eyes of the Lord

We read that "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him"; also, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." But this does not give us the thought that God personally beholds every individual act of every person on earth, but that He takes cognizance of matters throughout the world by means of His power, His agencies. These "eyes" referred to are the Lord's influence, His power of **knowing**, whatever the means. Whether His power is exercised and His will executed through angels or through other forces and agencies, it makes no difference—no more than it would with us in carrying out our wishes. If we wished to know about certain matters in Philadelphia, there would be various methods by which we could learn. One effective method would be to telephone and get into direct communication with the individual, provided he is supplied with a telephone. Or through the telegraph we could send a message; or we could send a messenger directly to the party, by foot or by train or some other conveyance.

Now if mankind have these various ways of accomplishing their designs, we can appreciate our Heavenly Father more by thinking of Him as having full ability to come into communication with His children, and as having various agents of communication. God has means, no doubt, far superior to any of ours. He has not revealed the matter clearly to us except to tell us that He is informed respecting all that concerns us, as well as respecting all the affairs of the world. He does tell us that angels are His ministers, and that these have a charge over His people. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" They do not minister in the sense of directly providing bread for us, nor in the sense of cooking our food, nor of building our houses—in none of these ways do they minister. How, then, do they serve us? We have no way of knowing positively how they serve except from the words of our Lord Jesus, that the angels of God's "little ones" always behold the face of the Father, always have access to Him.

The fact that these angels represent the Lord's "little ones" would imply that they would have immediate access to God and have immediate attention. What would be the use of the Father's receiving the angels into His presence unless there was something to be communicated? Our understanding is that God's knowledge of our affairs and interests is gained by methods with which we are not acquainted. We may assume, however, that the mediums used are largely the angelic messengers. The head of every business house and banking institution has certain laws, certain regulations, governing all the operations of the business. Just so God has certain laws governing nature. It is not necessary that we pray to God that the earth may turn around upon its axis and that tomorrow may come. We may be sure that the Almighty, the One who represents exact Justice and infinite Wisdom, has laws that govern His entire Universe; that the angels have insight into these laws; and that they are Jehovah's deputies, just as an earthly court might deputize some one to sit in chancery and to take information.

Our Lord Jesus the Chief Messenger

If in connection with our text we also have in mind our Lord's words before His ascension, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age," we shall understand that the Lord Jesus is the Chief Messenger, or Angel, of Jehovah. He has surely been the Chief Messenger to the Gospel Church. Our thought, then, is that through the angels and other agencies God is governing the world, and especially caring for His people, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of all the Divine spiritual powers and has charge of all Jehovah's affairs. We have been brought into the School of Christ. He is our Teacher. When we go to the Father in prayer, we do not ignore this Teacher, but we go in His name; and we are not to suppose that the Father would ignore Him. He would be the Father's Representative in dealing with us. But we are not to suppose that the Lord Jesus has every detail of the affairs of the world under His personal supervision; but rather that those angels report to Him whatever is necessary, and that thus there are certain principles operating. This seems to us to be the reasonable and logical arrangement of Divine operations. We are not insisting upon this for other minds, but merely saying that this appeals to our own mind.

In view of the fact that the Church has been put under the special guidance of the Lord Jesus, it would not be a far-fetched thought that Jehovah encampeth round about His people through Jesus, and that the angels are under His direction. If Satan is the chief of his band of angels, so our Lord would have angels under His control, and He would be their Prince. We read of what Alexander the Great accomplished, and of what Napoleon Bonaparte did, regardless of the fact that they had many thousands under them to carry out their will. So we think of all the spirit beings as under the direction and guidance of Jesus Christ. Into His hands God has committed all power in Heaven and on earth. All the angels of God were made subject to Him; and through these, under the control of our Lord, all the interests of God's people are supervised. This is our thought, and we like to think so.

Deliverance in Various Ways

Our text proceeds to say that the angel that encamps around the people of the Lord "delivereth them." In olden times the Lord's children were sometimes delivered miraculously. Some were delivered from prison; others were not. Some were delivered from the sword; others were not. We should accept the will of God, whatever it may be. But in order to be able to do this, for our personal good, our ultimate good, we must realize that the terms and conditions under which we accepted of Him were that we would give ourselves unreservedly into His hands. A proper fear, or reverence, for the Lord, would surely lead us to place ourselves fully in His keeping and under His guidance and control. Our experiences in life have shown us how unable we are to direct ourselves aright. The Lord will deliver each of us in the way that will bring us the largest measure of blessing.

In the days of the Apostles, St. Peter was delivered from prison by an angel of the Lord, who appeared to him as a man. This was in the interest, not only of the Apostle, but of the entire Church, showing them that the Lord was able to fully care for His people, giving them valuable lessons. And although these outward manifestations are not given to us of the present time, we have other blessings that more than compensate for these outward tokens that are not at present for the good of the Church. We are able to say with the Apostle that all things are working together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to His purpose. We should be full of confidence in Him—that we are subjects of His choicest care at all times.

Each Saint Has His Ministering Angel

While we may not be too positive in our interpretation on this subject, we understand that each one of the Lord's people, in proportion as he is one of God's true children, has a ministering spirit, a person, an angel, who has charge of his affairs. This angel makes his report to the Lord, whether monthly, weekly or hourly we do not know. If God sees this to be the wise, proper course, we have every confidence in His wisdom. Whatever God has arranged is fully satisfactory to us in this matter, and we are sure that it is quite right and fully in harmony with the Divine character.

We think that this principle is illustrated in the Book of the Prophet Daniel. Daniel had been praying and after some little time his prayer was answered. The angel Gabriel, who was the Lord's messenger to Daniel, explained to him certain things. At the beginning of his supplications the Lord had purposed to send him an answer. Gabriel had been sent especially to inform him, but had been detained by certain other duties. The fact of his detention should not give us the thought that Daniel or any of the Lord's people would ever be neglected; but that while minor affairs of Daniel were under the guidance of some lower angel, there were important matters that were entrusted to Gabriel as the plenipotentiary, as it were, in regard to Daniel's interest and other matters. There was a delay, and Gabriel mentioned what the delay was: the prince of Persia had withstood him for twenty-one days.

We have heretofore pointed out that the Gospel Age has been different from the Jewish Age and preceding ages: that after the Gospel Dispensation was ushered in, outward demonstrations, such as the gifts of the Holy Spirit—the gift of healing, the gift of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and discerning of spirits—and angelic visitations passed away: and that during the Gospel Age it has been God's will that the Spiritual House of Israel should walk by faith and not by sight, and that therefore it would be inappropriate after the Church was fully established to expect angels to appear, to manifest themselves outwardly.

But the angels of the Lord, nevertheless, have a charge more particularly over us of the Gospel Church than over any other of the Lord's people at any previous time in the world's history. The Lord is especially interested in Spiritual Israel. These angels, then, care for us, supervise our affairs, and are God's agencies or channels of communication to us as to His will; that is, communication in the sense of providences for us, causing **this** providence or the **other** providence.

Holy Angels Not Manifest to Our Senses

We would not give the thought of the angels whispering into our ears. We think that the angels which now whisper in the ear are the same ones that give table-tippings, planchette communications, communications through the hand by writing, and various other communications to the ear and the eye of spirit-mediums; namely, evil spirits, fallen angels. Our understanding is that the holy angels do nothing of the kind. The Lord's people of the present Age are to find their instruction in His Word. There is no need of a book on Mormonism or Spiritism or New Thought or of clairvoyant or clairaudient power for the Lord's children. These are all snares of the Adversary and his demons.

The followers of Christ have the Bible and the invisible ministries of the holy angels to provide for their interests and to providentially guard and guide their affairs. This, to us, is very real and of great comfort. If we had the thought that God was doing all this personally, we would think that He had certainly forgotten **us**. But having the assurance of His Word that not a hair of our heads can fall to the ground without our Father's attention, our mind can rest in the fact that He accomplishes His purposes in Christ for His children through the ministrations of the holy angels. —Z. '15:55-57.

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Those who are most zealous to serve the Lord, and most willing to sacrifice on behalf of his cause, are the ones who will receive the greatest present blessing of spiritual fellowship with the Lord, and who will be the best prepared to share the glories soon to be revealed.—Z. '00:233.

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We, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we, who have come to know him through his Word, and through his providences,—we can do naught else than reverence our God; and reverencing him we must trust him implicitly; and trusting him implicitly we will gladly walk in whatever way he may mark out for us; and thus trusting, and thus walking we are content, whatever lot we see, since 'tis his hand that leadeth us.—Z. '01:284, 285.

◆

We cannot build tabernacles on the mountain heights of faith and hope, and expect to dwell there in enraptured vision always. We must remember that the duties and trials of present experiences in conflicts with sin and with self and with the Adversary are essential and part of our covenant; but like the Master we should frequently seek the heavenly Father's blessing in prayer; and in proportion as we use this privilege will our hearts and our faces shine.—Z. '00:205.

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Remember that our characters are manifested by our habits of life; and each act, even the smallest, tends to form some new habit, or to confirm one already established. How important, then, that our thoughts and actions should not be aimless, but with a purpose (1 Cor. 10:31).—Z. '05:360.

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J. A. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 113

> *"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."* Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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Elisha Successor to Elijah

II. Kings 4:25-37

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Romans 6:23.

ELISHA was with Elijah until the whirlwind separated them and took Elijah out of sight. His mantle dropped to Elisha and Elisha's prayer was answered that a double portion of Elijah's spirit might rest upon him and that he might take up, in a measure, the work of Elijah as a teacher. Using the mantle to smite the river Jordan, the same miracle occurred to him as to Elijah. He passed over safely. On the other side of Jordan he began his career as a prophet. At Jericho the supply of water came from a brackish stream, unpalatable and unhealthful. Elisha went to the fountain and there performed a miracle similar to the one performed by Moses at the Wells of Moses at Marah. To this day the spring is known as Elisha's Fountain.

Again we read that one of these "sons of the prophets," or students, died and that his widowed mother was in want and that the Prophet Elisha helped her to exercise faith. She had a cruse of oil, which increased in supply as she poured it from vessel to vessel until she had sufficient for all her debts. Several other miracles of a restorationary character are noted, the most prominent of which is related in our lesson, namely, the restoration of a boy to life and health. The thing connected with Elisha's experiences which has attracted to him world-wide attention and general reprobation was his cursing of forty-two youths. These were children in the sense that every person is by the Law considered a child until twenty-one years of age—they had been mocking Elisha, crying, "Go up, thou bald head." Your Master, Elijah, went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Why do not you go also? You are a bald head, or one who has lost his master. You are not fit to pose as a prophet nor to be compared to Elijah. (This is our paraphrase.)

Elisha did not swear at the children; when we read that he cursed them the proper thought is that he condemned them, just as Jesus said to some with most kindly art, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees," etc. So Elisha pronounced woe or blight upon those youths of various ages who taunted him. He declared that something would befall them. Divine Justice would square accounts and vindicate him. Forthwith two she bears came upon the rabble, put them to flight, and forty-two of the mob were torn and wounded—more or less. Opponents of the Bible read into this that forty-two children were killed, but nothing of the kind is stated.

We are to remember that the Israelites under the leadership of their King Ahab and Queen Jezebel had been turned to idolatry, and that although the Prophet Elijah had re-established the true religion, the King and Queen and the majority of the people merely tolerated it.

The youths who had tiraded against Elisha were probably the young men and boys of Jericho, a hoodlum set ranging in years from ten to twenty, who had followed the Prophet, taunting him and, doubtless at the instigation of their parents, seemed to destroy his influence. The Divine judgment following the Prophet's denunciation was doubtless intended as a just rebuke and a profitable lesson for those torn and for their parents and for all who heard about it.

Elisha Considered Typical

Our interest in this story of Elisha's experiences after Elijah was taken away increases as we consider the fact that he, like Elijah, was quite a positive and typical character. We have already intimated a correspondency between Elijah and the antitypical priests and between Elisha and the antitypical Levites of the Gospel Age. Elisha may also typify the Ancient Worthies, into whose hands the instruction and blessing of the world will be placed at the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom: "Princes in all the earth." From this standpoint we might think of Elisha representing the secondary class of the spirit-begotten ones first, and that his crossing of Jordan represents the death of this class of antitypical Levites. With this view the after progress of Elisha and his work of judgment and restitution already referred to correspond well with what we should expect at the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom under the "princes." The healing of the water-spring would well represent the healing of the stream of Truth. For long centuries error and superstition, combined with Satan's great falsehood, Ye shall not surely die, have made the waters of Truth brackish, unpalatable, unhealthful. The putting of the salt into the Fountain or Spring symbolically represents the cleansing from untruth and error, through the cooperation of the Church in glory, which, while here, is appropriately styled, "the salt of the earth." The healing of the stream of Truth will come from the glorified Church, although it will come through the Ancient Worthies as a part of the New Covenant blessings then to come to the world of mankind through the Jews. This is also what St. Paul calls to our attention in Romans 11:25-33.

The "death in the pottage" will be effectually offset by the blessings of the Lord through his glorified Kingdom. The earth shall yield her increase. The wilderness shall blossom as the rose. Streams shall break forth in the desert. The blessing of the Lord will be everywhere—represented symbolically by the sons of the Prophets. These were some who separated themselves from the idolatries of their land and who gladly gave heed to the teachings of the Prophets, prophesying themselves, as their followers.

The blessing upon the widow's cruse of oil has symbolical signification, in proportion as we realize the value of the oil to the people of that time. It was not only a part of their food, but their general medicine and furnished them their light. What came through the prophets, therefore, is a very beautiful picture of restitution blessings, which may be expected in due time and which will come to all the worthy.

The restoration of life to the dead is to be one of the great features of the New Dispensation—Messiah's Kingdom. And this power will be exercised doubtless through the "princes" of that time, typified, we believe, by Elisha. Those most to be favored will be those who will most thoroughly appreciate and best receive the "princes," represented by Elisha, even as the parents of this child whom Elisha raised from the dead had made gracious provision for the prophet's comfort.

The judgment upon the opposers of the Elisha class, typified by the tearing of the forty-two, would seem to tell of disciplinary judgments which, during Messiah's Kingdom, will be promptly executed against all opponents of the Divine arrangements. The assurance of the Scriptures is, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"; "Judgment shall be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet."—Z. '11:42, 43.

7

Mercy and Truth Component Elements of Christian Character

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart." "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Prov. 3:3; Micah 6:8.

MERCY and Truth are great principles of righteousness. Truth and righteousness are, we may say, synonymous. That which is right is true, and that which is true—firm, faithful, steady, genuine—is usually right. The record does not say that we shall bind justice about our neck. Justice is a quality which we are not permitted to exalt too highly, except in our hearts and minds, as a principle of the Divine standard. We are to remember that there is none righteous, no, not one—none perfect. Hence our course in respect to Justice cannot be the same as that of our Heavenly Father. He recognizes no lower standard than justice, up to which everything must measure.

Give Mercy and Truth Prominent Place

If we are acceptable to the Father, it can be only by righteousness. And if we have not righteousness, it must be obtained from Christ; for God receives nothing short of perfection. Though imperfect in ourselves, we are to come up to the standard of justice as nearly as possible in our own personal conduct, but we are not to exact full justice from mankind. Since they have no one to make good for them, it is our duty to be benevolent toward them, and thus emulate the character of God, who is merciful. While He keeps the two qualities, Justice and Mercy, distinctly separate in His dealings, it is not for us to do so.

For one to keep the principles of truth and of righteousness before his own mind, is to be a thoroughly upright man or woman, one in whom truth, purity, goodness, will be in control. But a person who has merely these principles in control should cultivate more and more the quality of mercy. We should bind these about our neck. The thought is that of a necklace, or ornamental band. As a man puts around his neck a cravat, with a jewel in it as an ornament, placed where it will be displayed, so these qualities of character are jewels. Give them a prominent place; for they will help to make you better, help to make you more acceptable to the Lord.

The preferable place for the display of a jewel is the neck. There a jewel is especially conspicuous and ornamental. So we should fasten these noble qualities of character where they will be manifest in all the affairs of life. Whether we buy or sell, or whatever we do, we should wear these ornaments. They will show what is the character of the man or woman—right on the outside, in the very front. They should be seen as we meet others. There should be nothing mean, nothing contemptible, nothing niggardly about us.

Re-Writing Mercy and Truth Upon the Heart

More than this, we are to write mercy and truth in our hearts. We are to remember that originally God wrote the Divine Law in Adam's heart. We know that in the Divine heart, the Divine character, are the qualities of Truth and Mercy. God is merciful, kind and loving. And as God has these traits of character, so when He made man in His own image, His own likeness, man was created with these qualities in his character. Man was not created an unrighteous, an untruthful being.

But man fell from his original perfection. With the centuries of falling and imperfection of mind and body, and with every interest pressing for self-gratification at the expense of others, these principles of mercy and truth have become largely effaced from our hearts, just as the constant dropping of water, and the general wear and tear of the weather would tend to efface the original inscription on a stone. In time one could scarcely discern the characters. So we see in mankind that some have apparently lost all sense of justice, all sense of mercy, nearly all sense of patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness and love. All these qualities that belong to the heart, as originally placed there by God, have been more or less effaced—in some more than in others.

Purpose of God's Providences

Under the terms of the New Covenant and through the ministrations of Christ's Kingdom, God purposes to re-write upon the heart of man the original character which was in his heart, and which has been effaced by selfishness. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah. . . . I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:31-33.) "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."—Ezekiel 36:26.

God's Law is the Law of truth and mercy. Truth would include everything righteous, toward God and toward man. Mercy includes all the graces of character. The Millennium will be the time for the re-writing of these qualities in the character. And this work of re-writing the Divine character in the heart, which will progress in the world by and by, for a thousand years, is already begun in the Church. We write these qualities within our own hearts. The entering the School of Christ is voluntary, not compulsory. In the next Age mankind **must** write these qualities in their hearts, through the assistance of the Mediator. There will be stripes to bring mankind to righteousness. And if they are intentionally unwilling to obey the Laws of righteousness, they will be destroyed.

But now obedience is a voluntary matter. We declare that we desire to have these lessons written in our hearts; and to attain this end, we submit ourselves to the great Teacher. Then, by the various providences of our lives, He shows us where we have not yet engraved these qualities within our hearts. As we pray for patience, He gives us lessons of experience that will engender this quality in our hearts, and that will strengthen it more and more. As we pray for love, He gives us tests of love. As we pray that we may develop mercy, we find more opposition, which will develop mercy. Thus God gives us opportunities for the writing of truth and mercy in our hearts.

We must attain to that condition of heart where we shall **love** truth and righteousness, and where we shall **hate** iniquity and unrighteousness. As the people of God, we have the first opportunity now to develop these traits. And the Lord tells us that if we prove faithful in learning our lessons, it is His intention to use us during the Millennial Reign, His intention to make us judges of the world—its rulers, teachers.

The Jewish Law Helpful to Christians

The words of our second text were addressed to the Hebrew people and not to Christians; for there were no Christians at that time, of course. The words do not seem to be prophetic, but an exhortation to the people. Apparently the Jews thought that the Lord was asking too much of them; and since this was so, they felt that they should not take the Law too seriously. The Lord seems to bring the matter down to a specific statement: What is required of thee but three things; namely, to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? This would seem to be the sum total of the Law.

The Lord was looking to see Israel live as nearly up to the requirements of the Law as possible. And He purposed to bring them, in due time, the promised New Covenant, which would take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, thus making them tender-hearted. But if now they would walk as nearly as possible in harmony with the requirements of this law, doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with their God, they would be blessed accordingly.

While this Law was given to the Hebrews alone, nevertheless the principles inculcated therein are applicable to the whole world. Everybody who would have any standing with the Lord, is required to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. Therefore every statement of the Law, in that it gives the Christian a conception of God's standards, is helpful to the Christian; it shows him the standards of perfection. But the standard of a Christian goes higher than that of the Law. The Law is merely an amplification of the Golden Rule—Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Deal justly with others, if you would expect them to deal justly with you; and be merciful to others, if you would expect them to be merciful toward you.

In thinking of these qualities and considering which should be put first, we decide that in our conduct toward another, we could not think for a moment of giving anything less than **justice**. Additionally we might be as merciful as the circumstances would permit. But nothing **less** than justice should be thought of. In our requirements of others, however, we are—as before stated—not to expect full justice. Remember that the whole human family are imperfect. If by the grace of God we are able to be more just or more merciful than the average, it is through God's Spirit.

God's Standard of Righteous Conduct

To walk humbly with the Lord would imply that we were in that condition of mind in which we could be taught of Him, could appreciate His goodness and our own insignificance; that we were receiving whatever instructions He was sending. While God made our race in His image, we have largely lost that image. Therefore we should be very humble and teachable in all things.

Comparing God's requirements of Israel, as given in the text, with His requirements of the Church, we would say that God **requires** nothing more than this from the Church. This is as much as justice could require from any creature. The peculiarity of the position of the Church is that it is not one of **requirement**, but of **privilege**. But we see operating in the Church a still higher principle than that of Law; namely, that of **sacrifice**. As Jesus loved the Father and loved righteousness, and sacrificed His earthly will and earthly ambitions and privileges, so He set us an example that we should walk in His steps. It was not required of **Him** that He should do more than justice, but He was **permitted** to do more. And so with the Church. **We** are not required to do more than justice, but are permitted to do more. If we present our bodies living sacrifices, and are faithful to the end, the Lord will count us among those to whom He will be pleased to give, very soon, the glorious Kingdom, the Kingdom for which we pray.

2526 Government Street, Victoria, B.C.
Aug. 28th, 1923.

Dear Brethren:-

Loving greetings in the name of our dear Redeemer.

The work of the Lord in our midst during the past few weeks brings to our minds the words of the hymn,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

His wonders in our midst have been so surprising that we deem it well to send you a special letter.

Ever since the issue of Temple Notes the question of the Modern Worthies has been continually brought to the foreground. At first it was thought that a few of the Standfast Brethren belonged to this wonderful class but during the last few weeks, so many have been taking their places as probationary Modern Worthies that it is now quite evident that most, in fact very near all of the Standfast Brethren are favored of the Lord in having the hope of the Worthies before them. The number who claim to be spirit-begotten is decreasing almost daily and in the whole Standfast movement there are not twenty who have a reasonable hope of having been spirit-begotten. Some of the dear Brethren who have taken their places have been greatly used of the Lord and it is surprising to note that of the Old Corn Gem staff and Office staff, Bro. Edwards is the only one who now claims to be spirit-begotten. Amongst the Elders who have recently come to the conclusion that they are probationary Modern Worthies are Bros. Bartlett, Cooper, Sellars of Victoria, Bro. Hanham of Duncan; Bro. Haller of Vancouver; Bro. Towner of St. Walburg; Bro. Johnson of Minneapolis; Bro. [illegible] of Withee; Bro. Oscar Kuenzi of Richfield and also Bro. Zinck who is not only an Elder of ~~the~~ many of the classes but one of our recognized Comforter Brethren. Some of the dear ones who have arrived at this conclusion have been faithful servants of the Truth for over twenty years and their christian career has seemingly been without a flaw. This all goes to ~~s~~ show what a high standard the Lord has before the Worthies and we realize today as never before, the import of Bro. Russell's words when he tells us, that the only difference between the Worthies and the Little Flock class, is a question of time; the character standard before each one is exactly the same and the degree of faithfulness and loyalty to the Lord is just as high for the Worthies as it is for the Little Flock.

We stand in awe as we contemplate the wondrous work that the Lord himself is doing in our midst, inwardly we rejoice as never before, for in this work we have the greatest evidence that the end of our pilgrimage is right here. A few more months and we shall all

hear that sweet "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt.25:21; and some of us will enter into our Heavenly joy and some into the joy of the better resurrection with the Ancient Worthies. How wonderfully this work corroborates the chronology i.e., the high calling ceased forever in 1881 and that since that time but a very few have been spirit-begotten and these only when a crown has been vacated by one who has proved unfaithful.

The 7th Volume tells us that the Little Flock class were all mature and ready to be born in the Kingdom at the time the 7th Volume was given to us, no doubt some of us have wondered how it was, that if such was the case that the Lord did not take all the Feet Members home, now we can clearly see that one of the great reasons why some of them were left was that the Lord's dear consecrated Saints of th Worthy class might be helped to attain to maturity and might be fed with strong meat, food in due season. In Tabernacle Shadows page 119 par. 3 Bro. Russell tells us that only the Priests were permitted to go into the Holy but that the Levites (including the Gershomites--Modern Worthies) came to a knowledge of the glorious things within the Holy, when they were told about them by the Priest, from this we reason that a few Priests have been left, so that the dear Gershomites might come to a full knowledge of the Truth which they could not otherwise have fully received.

This letter is attended by the prayers of the Comforters and Committeemen and with it goes our sincerest love to all the dear consecrated Saints of the Lord everywhere.

Praying the Lord's richest blessing be with you.

Your Brethren by His Grace,

Standfast Bible Students

p.p. Comforters & Committee

SEP 4 1923

P.S. At the Duncan Convention Sept. 1st & 2nd after a consideration of the foregoing letter as presented in a discourse given by Bro. Heard the following motion was adopted, only one voting nay:- "That we in Convention assembled indorse Bro. Heard's talk and believe that the only spirit-begotten Little Flock class are the three Comforters Bros. Palmer, Heard and Edwards."

S.F.B.S.

ICE/EJE.

Various Degrees of Love

After we came voluntarily into this condition of sacrifice, it became a bondage to us in that we had taken vows to this effect, and we are bound by **our own vows.** We vowed that we would lay down our lives in harmony with the invitation: "Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." Still the Lord is not requiring more of us than justice. But He is waiting and watching to see to what extent we will be faithful to the agreement of our Covenant. If we are joint-sacrificers with Jesus, then we shall become joint-heirs with Him. At our consecration, we took His yoke upon us. Could we go back and take up the privilege of Restitution? No; this we gave up entirely! The only thing for us is to fulfil our Covenant of Sacrifice: and rebellion against that Covenant would mean the Second Death, everlasting destruction.

There are various degrees of love. That degree to which we have consecrated ourselves is the sacrificing love, which goes beyond what would be just to a brother, a neighbor or an enemy. This is the Love of God, which is an all-absorbing, an all-comprehensive love.

That the requirements of the texts are very reasonable will be conceded by all. That God could not require less from those whom He is educating for the future judging of the world, is evident, and yet all of these qualities specified through the Prophet are comprehended in the one word—**Love.** Love requires that we shall deal justly with our neighbors, with our brethren, with our families, with ourselves; that we shall seek to cultivate our appreciation of the rights of others—their physical rights, their moral and intellectual rights, their liberties; and that, appreciating these, we shall in no sense of the word seek to abridge or deny them. But, additionally, Love leads us to have the spirit of sacrifice that gladly lays down life itself for the brethren.—Z. '13: 275-277.

7

Samuel's Farewell Address

1 Sam. 12:13-25.

Golden Text:—"Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your hearts."

SAMUEL the Prophet stands out on the pages of sacred history a very noble character—very similar in many respects to Moses. He had served the Lord and the people faithfully for a long period, and then, at the urgent request of the people and with God's assent, he had anointed Saul their king. The latter had been received rather half-heartedly, but the battle with the Ammonites and the great victory which the Lord granted to his people on that occasion united their hearts to him who had been the visible leader in that victory, and Samuel perceived that the right time had come for a public coronation of the king, and the formal transfer of allegiance to him as the Lord's representative in the temporal affairs of the nation. Accordingly, a general convocation of the people was called to meet at Gilgal—one of the several prominent places for public gatherings—one of the places at which Samuel was in the habit of holding court when, as a kind of supreme judge, he went at different seasons of the year to various parts of the territory of Israel to hear and to decide causes and differences which the elders of the tribes could not adjudicate satisfactorily.

Upon the assembling of the people, the prophet Samuel opened his address (vss. 1-5) by calling upon God and the people to witness to his own rectitude of character in all of his dealings with them for the many years in which he had served them; to his justice in seeking to decide their various questions righteously; to his honesty, in that he never received even the smallest bribe, nor permitted anything to vitiate his judgment; neither had he been an oppressor of his people, but had always sought their good. With united voice the people concurred in the excellence and purity of his administration—a wonderful tribute, one which would be almost inconceivable in our day, in which we find that even the best and noblest officials are sure to have enemies, traducers, backbiters, slanderers. We are not to suppose that Samuel was merely eulogizing his own administration, but are, rather, to attribute to such a noble character a nobler object. He wished to make a lasting impression with this address and this transfer of authority to King Saul; and, to make his words more impressive and more effective in the interests of his successor and in the interests of the Lord's people, he impressed upon his hearers the fact that his entire life had been one of devotion, and that they might well understand that his words now were in full accord with all the course of his previous life. They would thus realize that he had their best interests at heart, that he was thoroughly loyal to the Lord, and that his example, as well as his advice, would be beneficial to them. Perhaps, too, he would thus set before the people a standard of what they might look for and hope for from their new king, and before the king a standard of the ideal after which he should pattern his rule.

Next, he called attention to God's faithfulness to them in the centuries past, from the time that he adopted them as his people and made a covenant with them through Moses and became their heavenly King. He recounted to the people the many deliverances which the Lord had wrought for them through various agents whom he had raised up. He would not wish them to think of the recent victory over the Ammonites as being the only one; but he desired that they recognize it, in common with all previous victories, as from

God purposes to re-write upon the heart of man the original character which was in his heart, and which has been effaced by selfishness. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah. . . . I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:31-33.) "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."—Ezekiel 36:26.

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But now obedience is a voluntary matter. We declare that we desire to have these lessons written in our hearts: and to attain this end, we submit ourselves to the great Teacher. Then, by the various providences of our lives, He shows us where we have not yet engraved these qualities within our hearts. As we pray for patience, He gives us lessons of experience that will engender this quality in our hearts, and that will strengthen it more and more. As we pray for love, He gives us tests of love. As we pray that we may develop mercy, we find more opposition, which will develop mercy. Thus God gives us opportunities for the writing of truth and mercy in our hearts.

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Comparing God's requirements of Israel, as given in the text, with His requirements of the Church, we would say that God **requires** nothing more than this from the Church. This is as much as justice could require from any creature. The peculiarity of the position of the Church is that it is not one of **requirement**, but of **privilege**. But we see operating in the Church a still higher principle than that of Law; namely, that of **sacrifice**. As Jesus loved the Father and loved righteousness, and sacrificed His earthly will and earthly ambitions and privileges, so He set us an example that we should walk in His steps. It was not required of **Him** that He should do more than justice, but He was **permitted** to do more. And so with the Church. **We** are not required to do more than justice, but are permitted to do more. If we present our bodies living sacrifices, and are faithful to the end, the Lord will count us among those to whom He will be pleased to give, very soon, the glorious Kingdom, the Kingdom for which we pray.

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Steadfast Bible Students

p.p. Comforters & Committee

SEP 4 1923

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We must attain to that condition of heart where we shall **love** truth and righteousness, and where we shall **hate** iniquity and unrighteousness. As the people of God, we have the first opportunity now to develop these traits. And the Lord tells us that if we prove faithful in learning our lessons, it is His intention to use us during the Millennial Reign, His intention to make us judges of the world—its rulers, teachers.

The Jewish Law Helpful to Christians

The words of our second text were addressed to the Hebrew people and not to Christians; for there were no Christians at that time, of course. The words do not seem to be prophetic, but an exhortation to the people. Apparently the Jews thought that the Lord was asking too much of them; and since this was so, they felt that they should not take the Law too seriously. The Lord seems to bring the matter down to a specific statement: What is required of thee but three things; namely, to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? This would seem to be the sum total of the Law.

The Lord was looking to see Israel live as nearly up to the requirements of the Law as possible. And He purposed to bring them, in due time, the promised New Covenant, which would take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, thus making them tender-hearted. But if now they would walk as nearly as possible in harmony with the requirements of this law, doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with their God, they would be blessed accordingly.

While this Law was given to the Hebrews alone, nevertheless the principles inculcated therein are applicable to the whole world. Everybody who would have any standing with the Lord, is required to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. Therefore every statement of the Law, in that it gives the Christian a conception of God's standards, is helpful to the Christian; it shows him the standards of perfection. But the standard of a Christian goes higher than that of the Law. The Law is merely an amplification of the Golden Rule—Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Deal justly with others, if you would expect them to deal justly with you; and be merciful to others, if you would expect them to be merciful toward you.

In thinking of these qualities and considering which should be put first, we decide that in our conduct toward another, we could not think for a moment of giving anything less than justice. Additionally we might be as merciful as the circumstances would permit. But nothing less than justice should be thought of. In our requirements of others, however, we are—as before stated—not to expect full justice. Remember that the whole human family are imperfect. If by the grace of God we are able to be more just or more merciful than the average, it is through God's Spirit.

God's Standard of Righteous Conduct

To walk humbly with the Lord would imply that we were in that condition of mind in which we could be taught of Him, could appreciate His goodness and our own insignificance; that we were receiving whatever instructions He was sending. While God made our race in His image, we have largely lost that image. Therefore we should be very humble and teachable in all things.

Comparing God's requirements of Israel, as given in the text, with His requirements of the Church, we would say that God **requires** nothing more than this from the Church. This is as much as justice could require from any creature. The peculiarity of the position of the Church is that it is not one of **requirement,** but of **privilege.** But we see operating in the Church a still higher principle than that of Law; namely, that of **sacrifice.** As Jesus loved the Father and loved righteousness, and sacrificed His earthly will and earthly ambitions and privileges, so He set us an example that we should walk in His steps. It was not required of **Him** that He should do more than justice, but He was **permitted** to do more. And so with the Church. **We** are not required to do more than justice, but are permitted to do more. If we present our bodies living sacrifices, and are faithful to the end, the Lord will count us among those to whom He will be pleased to give, very soon, the glorious Kingdom, the Kingdom for which we pray.

2526 Government Street, Victoria, B.C.
Aug. 28th, 1923.

Dear Brethren:-

Loving greetings in the name of our dear Redeemer.

The work of the Lord in our midst during the past few weeks brings to our minds the words of the hymn,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

His wonders in our midst have been so surprising that we deem it well to send you a special letter.

Ever since the issue of Temple Notes the question of the Modern Worthies has been continually brought to the foreground. At first it was thought that a few of the Standfast Brethren belonged to this wonderful class but during the last few weeks, so many have been taking their places as probationary Modern Worthies that it is now quite evident that most, in fact very near all of the Standfast Brethren are favored of the Lord in having the hope of the Worthies before them. The number who claim to be spirit-begotten is decreasing almost daily and in the whole Standfast movement there are not twenty who have a reasonable hope of having been spirit-begotten. Some of the dear Brethren who have taken their places have been greatly used of the Lord and it is surprising to note that of the Old Corn Gem staff and Office staff, Bro. Edwards is the only one who now claims to be spirit-begotten. Amongst the Elders who have recently come to the conclusion that they are probationary Modern Worthies are Bros. Bartlett, Cooper, Sellars of Victoria, Bro. Hanham of Duncan; Bro. Haller of Vancouver; Bro. Towner of St. Walburg; Bro. Johnson of Minneapolis; Bro. [illegible] of Withee; Bro. Oscar Kuenzi of Richfield and also Bro. Zinck who is not only an Elder of ~~the~~ many of the classes but one of our recognized Comforter Brethren. Some of the dear ones who have arrived at this conclusion have been faithful servants of the Truth for over twenty years and their christian career has seemingly been without a flaw. This all goes to ~~s~~ show what a high standard the Lord has before the Worthies and we realize today as never before, the import of Bro. Russell's words when he tells us, that the only difference between the Worthies and the Little Flock class, is a question of time; the character standard before each one is exactly the same and the degree of faithfulness and loyalty to the Lord is just as high for the Worthies as it is for the Little Flock.

We stand in awe as we contemplate the wondrous work that the Lord himself is doing in our midst, inwardly we rejoice as never before, for in this work we have the greatest evidence that the end of our pilgrimage is right here. A few more months and we shall all

hear that sweet "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt.25:21; and some of us will enter into our Heavenly joy and some into the joy of the better resurrection with the Ancient Worthies. How wonderfully this work corroborates the chronology i.e., the high calling ceased forever in 1881 and that since that time but a very few have been spirit-begotten and these only when a crown has been vacated by one who has proved unfaithful.

The 7th Volume tells us that the Little Flock class were all mature and ready to be born in the Kingdom at the time the 7th Volume was given to us, no doubt some of us have wondered how it was, that if such was the case that the Lord did not take all the Feet Members home, now we can clearly see that one of the great reasons why some of them were left was that the Lord's dear consecrated Saints of th Worthy class might be helped to attain to maturity and might be fed with strong meat, food on due season. In Tabernacle Shadows page 119 par. 3 Bro. Russell tells us that only the Priests were permitted to go into the Holy but that the Levites (including the Gershomites--Modern Worthies) came to a knowledge of the glorious things within the Holy, when they were told about them by the Priest, from this we reason that a few Priests have been left, so that the dear Gershomites might come to a full knowledge of the Truth which they could not otherwise have fully received.

This letter is attended by the prayers of the Comforters and Committeemen and with it goes our sincerest love to all the dear consecrated Saints of the Lord everywhere.

Praying the Lord's richest blessing be with you.

Your Brethren by His Grace

Standfast Bible Students

p.p. Comforters & Committee

SEP 4 1923

P.S. At the Duncan Convention Sept. 1st & 2nd after a consideration of the foregoing letter as presented in a discourse given by Bro. Heard the following motion was adopted, only one voting nay:- "That we in Convention assembled indorse Bro. Heard's talk and believe that the only spirit-begotten Little Flock class are the three Comforters Bros. Palmer, Heard and Edwards."

S.F.B.S.

ICE/EJL.

Various Degrees of Love

After we came voluntarily into this condition of sacrifice, it became a bondage to us in that we had taken vows to this effect, and we are bound by our own vows. We vowed that we would lay down our lives in harmony with the invitation: "Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." Still the Lord is not requiring more of us than justice. But He is waiting and watching to see to what extent we will be faithful to the agreement of our Covenant. If we are joint-sacrificers with Jesus, then we shall become joint-heirs with Him. At our consecration, we took His yoke upon us. Could we go back and take up the privilege of Restitution? No; this we gave up entirely! The only thing for us is to fulfil our Covenant of Sacrifice; and rebellion against that Covenant would mean the Second Death, everlasting destruction.

There are various degrees of love. That degree to which we have consecrated ourselves is the sacrificing love, which goes beyond what would be just to a brother, a neighbor or an enemy. This is the Love of God, which is an all-absorbing, an all-comprehensive love.

That the requirements of the texts are very reasonable will be conceded by all. That God could not require less from those whom He is educating for the future judging of the world, is evident, and yet all of these qualities specified through the Prophet are comprehended in the one word—**Love.** Love requires that we shall deal justly with our neighbors, with our brethren, with our families, with ourselves; that we shall seek to cultivate our appreciation of the rights of others—their physical rights, their moral and intellectual rights, their liberties; and that, appreciating these, we shall in no sense of the word seek to abridge or deny them. But, additionally, Love leads us to have the spirit of sacrifice that gladly lays down life itself for the brethren.—Z. '13: 275-277.

7

Samuel's Farewell Address

1 Sam. 12:13-25.

Golden Text:—"Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your hearts."

SAMUEL, the Prophet stands out on the pages of sacred history a very noble character—very similar in many respects to Moses. He had served the Lord and the people faithfully for a long period, and then, at the urgent request of the people and with God's assent, he had anointed Saul their king. The latter had been received rather half-heartedly, but the battle with the Ammonites and the great victory which the Lord granted to his people on that occasion united their hearts to him who had been the visible leader in that victory, and Samuel perceived that the right time had come for a public coronation of the king, and the formal transfer of allegiance to him as the Lord's representative in the temporal affairs of the nation. Accordingly, a general convocation of the people was called to meet at Gilgal—one of the several prominent places for public gatherings — one of the places at which Samuel was in the habit of holding court when, as a kind of supreme judge, he went at different seasons of the year to various parts of the territory of Israel to hear and to decide causes and differences which the elders of the tribes could not adjudicate satisfactorily.

Upon the assembling of the people, the prophet Samuel opened his address (vss. 1-5) by calling upon God and the people to witness to his own rectitude of character in all of his dealings with them for the many years in which he had served them; to his justice in seeking to decide their various questions righteously; to his honesty, in that he never received even the smallest bribe, nor permitted anything to vitiate his judgment; neither had he been an oppressor of his people, but had always sought their good. With united voice the people concurred in the excellence and purity of his administration—a wonderful tribute, one which would be almost inconceivable in our day, in which we find that even the best and noblest officials are sure to have enemies, traducers, backbiters, slanderers. We are not to suppose that Samuel was merely eulogizing his own administration, but are, rather, to attribute to such a noble character a nobler object. He wished to make a lasting impression with this address and this transfer of authority to King Saul; and, to make his words more impressive and more effective in the interests of his successor and in the interests of the Lord's people, he impressed upon his hearers the fact that his entire life had been one of devotion, and that they might well understand that his words now were in full accord with all the course of his previous life. They would thus realize that he had their best interests at heart, that he was thoroughly loyal to the Lord, and that his example, as well as his advice, would be beneficial to them. Perhaps, too, he would thus set before the people a standard of what they might look for and hope for from their new king, and before the king a standard of the ideal after which he should pattern his rule.

Next, he called attention to God's faithfulness to them in the centuries past, from the time that he adopted them as his people and made a covenant with them through Moses and became their heavenly King. He recounted to the people the many deliverances which the Lord had wrought for them through various agents whom he had raised up. He would not wish them to think of the recent victory over the Ammonites as being the only one; but he desired that they recognize it, in common with all previous victories, as from

the Lord, by whatsoever hand they were effected. He would have them discern that they exercised great ingratitude in forgetting that the Lord had all this time been their King, and in preferring an earthly king to the government he had established. Nevertheless, now that God had granted their request and given them an earthly king, they must not fail to recognize that he was only the representative of their real King, the heavenly One. Otherwise, their condition would be deplorable in every way. They had the king of their choice and God had set him over them; let the matter thus stand, and from this new standpoint they should go on to make the best of their condition; and to do this, would be to give close attention to the commandments of the Lord.

Obedience to the Lord would bring blessings both to the people and their king, and disobedience and rebellion or any measure of irreverence toward the Lord and his commandments would bring upon them divine disfavor and injury. Not that the Lord would vindictively render evil for evil, but the hand of the Lord would be against them in the same sense that the current of the river is against the persons who attempt to go contrary to it. Divine justice has its steady flow. It is irrepressible; it opposes anything that comes against it, and favors anything that goes in harmony with it. We can recognize something of this principle in various laws of nature; as, for instance, gravitation. Let us also recognize that the principles of divine government operate in a very similar manner. As fire burns the evil or the good when they come in contact with it, and as the law of gravitation operates in respect to all, whether good or bad, who come into the line of its influence, so the principles of divine justice operate automatically.

The correctness of the foregoing statement may be questioned by some, who may say that in the majority of cases justice does not seem to operate; that those who tempt God are set up, and those who work wickedness and deceit often prosper. We reply that in order to understand our position it must be remembered that God's government has never been established in the world except over the one nation of Israel; and, hence, only in that one nation should we expect to find the laws of retribution operating automatically. The Lord said of Israel, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) Again, the Apostle asks, "What advantage hath the Jew?" and, answering, declares, "Much every way; chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." God entered into obligations with Israel that if they, as a people, would obey his laws and keep his statutes, they would be blessed in proportion to their faithfulness and obedience; and if they should fail of obedience, they would be correspondingly punished; that he would permit to come upon them various chastisements—diseases, etc.—as the natural results of the violations of the principles of his government. But such an arrangement has not been made with other nations at any time in the world's history. With spiritual Israel God's blessings and chastisements are spiritual, and do not extend to temporal affairs. In proportion to their faithfulness they grow spiritually strong and beautiful; and in proportion to their unfaithfulness they grow spiritually weak and receive chastisements and lose divine favor. It is not true with the spiritual Israelite as it was with the natural Israelite, that by obeying the Lord he would be blessed temporally in all his undertakings. On the contrary, to the spiritual Israelite the Lord gives the express declaration and encouragement: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall [in this life] suffer persecution"; "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"; "Ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven"—in spiritual things, not in temporal matters.—2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Jno. 3:13; John 15:18; Matt. 5:11, 12.

When the Millennial Kingdom shall be established, and, in harmony with the petition of our Lord's prayer, God's Kingdom shall come, and his will be done on earth as in heaven—then the laws of righteousness will work automatically again, and "every transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward," and every proper endeavor will bring its meed of blessing and uplifting influence—restitution. The divine regulations operating toward fleshly Israel in the days of Samuel differ from those to operate toward the whole world in the Millennial age, in that the latter will have a greater prophet than Moses, a greater priest than Aaron, a greater king than Saul. The Lord's Anointed will include all the graces, powers and qualities represented in these types, but on a perfect scale and backed by divine wisdom, justice, love and power, and will put down all insubordination and permanently establish righteousness upon a proper basis throughout the world, eventually destroying all who will not come into accord with its principles.

Samuel proceeded to do a miracle before the people—to cause a thunder shower in the middle of harvest. In Palestine they have the early and the latter rains. The spring rains usually end in April, and the fall rains begin in October or November. A writer on the subject says, "In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers in spring until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene." The wheat harvest which the prophet pointed out to them as just in order, must have been the first of June and, hence, nothing could have been further from the expectation of the people than a thunder-shower at that time. The bringing of it at the prophet's announcement, was to remind the people how completely their affairs and interests were in divine power. They were to discern that the recent victory need not have been theirs except as the Lord had been pleased to favor them and grant them the victory; and that simply by bringing unfavorable showers upon their harvest the entire fruitage of their labors of many months might be quickly spoiled and they be reduced to starvation, and in that way become more thoroughly subdued than by any foreign invasion. The prophet calls their attention to the wickedness of their course in the rejection of God as their King, and to this power of God, which could easily be exercised did he wish to requite them according to their dealings with him.

The people saw the point. They discerned that if it were to rain a few days they would lose their all; they recognized that they were wholly in the power of God, and entreated Samuel to pray for them, confessing not only the wrongs they had done in seeking a king, but also their sins; "We have added unto our sins."

As the Lord's mouthpiece, the prophet assured the people that they need not fear God's taking vengeance upon them, notwithstanding their wrong course. On the contrary, they should more fully than ever determine to turn to the Lord wholeheartedly, and let their mistake and the trials and difficulties that would come to them as a result of it prove a blessing to them in drawing their hearts nearer and nearer to the Lord, their true King, who never sought anything but their highest welfare. So it should be with us. If at any time we find that we have taken a wrong course which is irretrievable, we may expect it to bring the disappointments as the Lord foretold; but he may permit it to bring, as well, some blessings in the way of contrition of heart, and humility toward the Lord, and greater zeal, watchfulness and faithfulness for the future. Thus, even some of the blunders of life may become stepping-stones to higher planes of grace and truth.

The sentiment of verse 22 is very beautiful, and, doubtless, was very encouraging to the Israelites in assuring them of God's continued love and favor toward them because of his having adopted them as his people. Applying this verse to spiritual Israel, we may take great comfort from it, too. If it was a favor to natural Israel to be adopted as the Lord's peculiar people, as the house of servants, how much greater is the blessing to spiritual Israel, adopted of the Lord as the house of sons under the chief Son, Jesus; "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end!" (Heb. 3:6.) It is well that the Lord's people be called upon to fear, to reverence, the Lord; but if the Scriptures were entirely made up of commands and reproofs, the Lord's people would all surely have been discouraged long ago. On the contrary, with the reproofs and corrections, the Lord gives us very precious testimonies respecting his love and mercy, his goodness and long-suffering kindness, to encourage us. All who are laboring against the course of this world and against public opinion and against the weaknesses of their own flesh and against the great adversary Satan, need spiritual encouragement — assurances that the Lord is for them. The Apostle points this out, saying, "If God be for us who can be against us?"—what will all the opposition against us amount to if God be on our side? He again encourages us with precious words, reminding us of the unchangeableness of God and of the fact that he has already done great things for us and is preparing to do still greater things. If while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly, much more shall his favor be with us now that we are adopted into his family and are seeking to walk in his ways. . . .

The grandeur of the Prophet's character shines out in the twenty-third verse again: he seems to have none of the petty animosities which some smaller creatures might have under the circumstances, and was a patriot to the core of his heart, as well as a faithful representative and ambassador of the Lord and mediator of his people. He says, practically: "Nothing that you have done toward me—rejecting me in choosing King Saul—shall in any manner or degree hinder my love for you and my prayers on your behalf. God forbid that it should! I should consider this a sin against the Lord who has placed me as a kind of representative of him to you, and of you to him; and I certainly would be failing of my duty and privilege did I neglect this important office of mediator. You may rely upon it that I not only will refrain from pleading against you with the Lord, but that I will petition him on your behalf."

The nobility of Samuel's course may well be copied by the Lord's people under various circumstances in life. When those who are near and dear to us flag in their love and devotion, they need all the more our sympathy and our prayers. . . . The prophet indicates that, although he was ceasing to be their judge and ruler, he would not cease to be their instructor in the good and right way so long as the Lord's providences might permit him to serve them, and so long as they would accept his aid.

Recurring, however, to the principal point of his instructions, he points out that reverence for the Lord, serving him in truth with all their heart, was not only a proper course, but a course which would bring them the Lord's blessing. And as a help to our flagging zeal, we should continually remind ourselves of the Lord's great blessings to us. As we learn to appreciate the goodness of the Lord, if rightly disposed at all, the influences will be to strengthen us and to make us more and more loyal to him. Failing to seek with our whole heart the Lord's service after we have become his people and entered into covenant relationship with him, receiving of his favors and blessings in this life, and also, by promise, in the life to come, would mean wickedness which, persevered in, will surely bring destruction. Faithfulness to God should be the key-note of all our desires. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."—Psa. 19:14.—Z. '03:215-218.

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The true child of God, the real Truth-seeker, following the proper lines, and properly trusting to the Lord, according to His word, will neither ignore nor reject the assistance which God has been pleased to render through teachers in the Church. He will merely seek to find such teachers as God shall raise up, and the distinction between these and sectarian teachers; and one of his best, safest and surest methods of knowing the teachers whom the Lord will raise up, will be by their ability to make simple, clear, plain, the Word of God—"written aforetime for our admonition."—Z. '16:74.

A Perfume of Sweet Odor

Matt. 26: 6-16.

"She hath done what she could."

BETHANY, the home-city of Lazarus (whom our Lord raised from the dead) and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, was quite near to Jerusalem, and with them Jesus decided to spend his last Sabbath day in the flesh. We may presume that the day was happily spent according to the observance of the Sabbath required by the Jewish law; but the narrative, passing over the events of the day unnoticed, draws special attention to the feast or supper made for our Lord in the evening, after sundown, when the Sabbath was considered ended, and the first day of the week beginning.

This feast was at the house of Simon the leper, yet Simon is not mentioned in connection with the narrative, and it is quite probable that he was then dead. It is conjectured that Simon was either the father of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, or else that Martha was the widow of Simon, and that Lazarus and Mary were younger than she. These items, however, are merely tradition, nothing in the Scriptures throwing any light upon the matter. We remember that on the occasion of a previous visit to this home, our Lord was entertained; and Mary became so absorbed in listening to the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth that for the time she neglected the ordinary affairs of life, until her more practical, but possibly less spiritually-inclined, sister commented upon the fact, which brought forth our Lord's declaration to the effect that while service is quite acceptable and appreciated, veneration and fellowship are still more appreciated—"Mary hath chosen the better part."

The two sisters had the enviable privilege of serving the Lord and ministering to his comfort in the feast of our lesson, just before the agonies which closed his earthly life. As before, so now, the service of the two sisters took somewhat different form, but probably this time by mutual agreement and prearrangement; Martha herself served the table with others assisting, and Mary was left free to render her peculiar service, of which this lesson is a memorial. From some source she had procured a valuable alabaster vase of choice perfume. She had either purchased the vase, and manufactured the perfume herself, at great expense of time, etc., or had spent for its purchase a considerable sum of money. She had anticipated our Lord's coming, and had fully arranged matters so that at this feast she might treat him in a manner in which very few except the worldly great were ever treated;—kings, emperors, etc., were thus anointed with perfume, but very rarely indeed could others afford such a luxury, for the facilities for manufacturing perfume then were quite inferior to what they are now, and even if the perfume were of home manufacture and of fine quality the cost in time, etc., would be great, and the perfume would be so valuable that it was usual to sell it to the very wealthy.

The feast had begun, and Jesus, with the disciples and other guests, were at the table, which, according to eastern custom, was long and narrow, the guests not sitting upon chairs, but reclining full length upon couches or divans, with the head extending over the table, and the feet extending back to the rear, the weight of the shoulders poised upon the left elbow, while the right hand was used in partaking of the food.

While Martha and her associates were serving, Mary came forward and, breaking the seal upon her alabaster vase, she began to pour the precious perfume upon our Lord's head, and subsequently, as John's record of the matter informs us, going to our Lord's feet she poured some of it upon them, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Mary's affection for our Lord was so deep and so strong that it could not be satisfied with any of the ordinary methods of expression. If the kings of earth were perfumed and anointed, much more did she esteem it fitting that her friend, her Lord, the Messiah, should be anointed with the best that she could procure for him. Her love was so intense that it knew no economy—nothing could be too good for her Beloved. She would give expression to the rich sentiments of her heart by giving him the finest and most costly of sweet natural odors. Our Lord appreciated the matter fully—the sweet odor of the heart-love which prompted the act, still more than the sweet odors which filled the entire house.

But the disciples, more selfish and less able to appreciate Mary's true sentiments, and the propriety of their expression in this form, found fault with her, and the records show that their leader and mouthpiece, who incited the fault-finding spirit amongst the others, was Judas, the treasurer of the little company, whose disappointment was great that the value of this ointment did not find its way into his money-bag, and thus a part of it, at least, to his own private uses; for we are told, "He was a thief, and carried the bag." His objection seems to favor the thought that Mary may have prepared the perfume herself, for he does not object to its having been **purchased** for a large sum, but that it might have been **sold** for three hundred pence. (Mark 14:5.) Estimating the value at 300 Roman pence, or **denarii**, worth about 16 cents each, the value of the ointment would be about forty-eight dollars, but much more than this amount would represented in today's values; for we are to remember that a **denarius** represented a workman's wages for a day, and hence that 300 **denarii** would practically represent a workman's wages for a year. It was indeed an extravagant action, but it represented an extravagant love, and was expended upon one whom God and the angels delighted to honor, and whom Mary seems to have appreciated much more nearly at his true value than did his other associates of the hour.

Beloved Mary! We can, perhaps, imagine to some extent the emotions which filled her heart as she prepared this costly expression of her devotion, the sentiment of which she hoped others would appreciate. But now, on the contrary, she beholds the "indignation" of her friends and guests, the Master's nearest companions; and her heart sinks within her as she fears that the Lord himself will view the matter in a similar light, and reject and disapprove her libation. What a load is lifted from her heart, when she hears our Lord pronouncing her work a noble deed, and reproving his disciples for lack of sympathy in her sentiment, telling them that this perfuming of his body was in preparation for his burial. It was probably in the midst of this discussion of the matter between Jesus and the apostles that Mary, having anointed his head with the perfume, went to his feet, and began anointing them also, wiping them with her hair, as an evidence that the most precious thing of her personal adornment was gladly at the service of her Lord.

Probably Mary had no thought of perfuming our Lord's body for burial, and his words to this effect would be as astounding to her as to the others who heard them. It was customary with the ancients to spend considerable care and money upon the persons of their dead in preparing them for burial; sweet spices and perfumes, etc., were lavishly bestowed, just as today it is the custom to provide handsome caskets and many and expensive flowers and fine monuments, as expressive of the love and appreciation in which the dead are held by their friends. In Mary's conduct in the pouring of the precious perfume upon the Savior while he was yet living, we have a most excellent suggestion in respect to the proper course to be pursued toward those we love. It is far, far better that we should unstop our alabaster vases of perfume, and pour them upon the heads and upon the weary feet of our friends, while still they live, than that we should wait until they have expired, and then give our attention to the cold, inanimate and unappreciative corpse. Our alabaster boxes are our hearts, which should be full of the richest and sweetest perfumes of good wishes, kindness and love toward all, but especially toward the Christ—toward the Head of Christ, our Lord Jesus, and toward all the members of his body, the Church: and especially on our part toward the feet members who are now with us, and on whom we now have the privilege of pouring out the sweet odors of love and devotion in the name of the Lord, and because we are his. The poet writes:

"How oft we, careless, wait till life's sweet activities
are past,
And break our 'alabaster box of ointment' at the
very last!
O, let us heed the living friend, who walks with us
life's common ways,
Watching our eyes for looks of love, and hungering for a word of praise!"

The heart of each truly consecrated child of God is like the alabaster vase,—a receptacle for the holy spirit, the spirit of love, the choicest perfume and most precious to the Lord and to men. It is expensive, because it cannot be gathered rapidly, but requires patient perseverance in well-doing to be "filled with all the fulness of God." Again, it is like Mary's vase in that it gives forth its odor not before, but after the seal is broken and the contents poured forth. It differs from hers, however, in the fact that it may be continually poured out and yet its fulness all the while increase.

Our hearts and their holy love are like Mary's vase again, in that they should be poured upon the Lord himself—upon the Head first, but subsequently upon the members of his body, even the humblest, the lowliest, the feet. And this should be our service, even though it be unappreciated by others, who instead would think that we should pour our love and devotion upon sinners, or upon the poor heathen world. They realize not what abundant opportunities there will be for blessing the heathen world in the future, in the Millennial age, which God has set apart for their blessing, and in which his disciples will have abundant opportunity for co-working with him in the general uplifting of the world of mankind. Those who upbraid us for pouring out our heart-treasures upon the members of Christ, the Church, do so through ignorance, and if at times it has caused some discouragement to us, let us hearken to the words of the Master, declaring that such is a noble course that has his approval, and that it is proper as a prelude to the burial of the entire Church, the body;—that it will be appropriate that this shall be done to the Church rather than for the poor world, up to the time when the Church shall have finished the earthly pilgrimage;—up to the time when the sufferings of Christ having been fulfilled there shall be no longer opportunity to bless and refresh and comfort the body of Christ, respecting whom our Lord declares that what is done to them is done to him.—Matt. 25:40.

So, then, let the Marthas serve the Lord in one way, and the Marys pour out their most precious spikenard perfume, assured that neither service will be forgotten; for both are told and have been told for eighteen centuries, as memorials to their praise, testimonies of their love, which the Lord appreciated and accepted, however they were were viewed by others.—Z. '00:376-378.

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As God and his glory and honor are to be first in the minds of his children, so their next thought should be for the glorious Kingdom, which he has promised shall bless the world. However much our own personal interests and affairs may be pressing upon us, and however much we may desire to have the Lord's blessing and guidance in them, they are not to outrank our appreciation of his beneficent arrangements which he has so clearly promised in his Word. We are to remember that the Kingdom, when it shall come, will be a panacea for every ill and every trouble, not only for us, but for the whole world of mankind. We are not, therefore, to permit our own personal needs to be too prominent, but are to remember that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for this glorious Kingdom and the blessing upon all the families of the earth, which our heavenly Father has promised shall yet come through the seed of Abraham.—Z. '04:119.

David Anointed King

1 Samuel 16:4-13.

(S) Sept. 18

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the Heart."—1 Samuel 16: 7.

KING SAUL'S rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the throne, but that his sons should not succeed him in it. Furthermore, it meant also the Lord's selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord's choice was David, to whom the Prophet Samuel had indirectly referred, saying "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou [King Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." 1 Samuel 13:14.

At the time of the events of today's Study, David was about twenty years old; consequently the Prophet's words must have been uttered about the time of David's birth. Thus we have another illustration of God's foreknowledge and design in respect to those whom He especially uses in His service. Similarly God's choice of Jacob was declared before he was born; and similarly the Apostle Paul was chosen from before his birth. We are to separate from this declaration any false thought respecting the Divine choice, and note that none of these was chosen to eternal life, but each of them, all of them, chosen and fitted for special service.

This gives us a suggestion of the possibility of paternal and maternal influence affecting the natural disposition of a human being from before his birth. He still has a will, however; and even though favorably endowed, it remains with himself to determine, to will, whether or not he will walk in the Lord's ways and to what extent he will be obedient. There is no coercion of the will; for the Lord seeks such as worship Him in spirit—willingly, heartily—and in truth.

David's great-grandmother was the gentle Ruth, who gleaned grain probably in the very field with which David was familiar. His great-grandfather's name was Boaz, a page of whose history is recorded in the Book of Ruth. Like Boaz, David's father Jesse was doubtless one of the Elders of the city of Bethlehem, respected and honored as a noble man. Of his mother we know little, except that David twice mentioned her as a handmaid of God.

Samuel's Faith Tested

The Prophet Samuel mourned and prayed for King Saul, and apparently was disappointed that this man, of whom he had expected such great things and under whose guidance he had anticipated great prosperity for Israel, should be rejected. Quite probably fearful forebodings of a civil war to result from the installation of a new king perturbed the Prophet's mind. He knew that Saul would not quietly submit to laying down the scepter which he had taken up with so great modesty, in obedience to the Divine arrangement. The Prophet's mental eye could see the probability of civil strife, which might rupture the nation and cause great trouble. He should have had greater trust in the Wisdom and the Power of the Almighty, but his trouble was more or less like that which assails all of the Lord's people even today.

The lesson to our hearts should be that we will implicitly trust the Lord to manage His own affairs; that we will trust Him where we cannot trace Him and will be obedient to His directions; and that so far from mourning at the execution of His plans we will rejoice, knowing that all things are working together for good to them that love God—that all things will ultimately work blessings for those who are in accord with the Lord — blessings for the future life, if not for the present.

When sent to anoint David, the Prophet Samuel exhibited a fear not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood that it meant the risk of his own life—that King Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him to go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there and, incidentally, to improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the one who in due time would be made known and exalted to the throne. At the time, he was merely to perform the initial work, which David's father and brethren would not understand, thinking perhaps that the anointing meant a special blessing or a commission from the Lord to engage as a member of the school of the prophets or something else of this kind. Quite probably, however, the Prophet informed David privately of the meaning of the anointing, just as he had privately informed Saul when he secretly anointed the latter to the office of king of Israel.

God's Choice of King

Our Study begins at the point when the Prophet Samuel had arrived at Bethlehem. The Elders were in fear, thinking that his presence signified some sin on their part, or on the part of some of their fellow-citizens, which God had sent him to reprove and to punish. Hence they inquired whether or not he came peaceably—whether or not his presence meant a blessing or the infliction of a penalty. Their fears were allayed when they heard that his mission was a peaceable one—to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord.

Some time before this, the Ark of the Covenant had been captured by the Philistines. The Tabernacle services, thus discontinued, had not yet been re-established, and for this reason this sacrificing was performed by the Lord's especially appointed servant. The command to the people of Bethlehem to sanctify themselves if they would be participators in the blessings of the sacrifice signified that they should wash their persons, put on clean clothes and draw nigh to the Lord with their hearts. Thus they typically represented that justification and sanctification which the Church has enjoyed.

The Prophet seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen, and might anoint him to the office and give him the Divine blessing in preparation of it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the Prophet according to the order of their birth—his eldest, Eliab, first. As he was of fine appearance the Prophet naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice; but as he looked to the Lord for direction in the matter he got the response—in what manner we know not—which constitutes the Golden Text of this Study.

Judged from the human standpoint of appearance, age, ability, etc., Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation, but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart, and had already selected David as a man after his own heart, although, at this time being under age, his father had not thought worth while to send for him to be present at the feast. As one after another of Jesse's sons appeared, the Prophet found not him whom the Lord's Spirit indicated as the one to be anointed. Then he inquired, "Are all thy children here?" Jesse suddenly remembered that he had another boy, his youngest, who was in the field with his sheep, and sent for him. . . .

The name David signifies Beloved; and as it applied especially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, "This is My Beloved Son," so also it applies to all the members of His Body, each of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. Of such the Head says, "The Father Himself loveth you"; and again, He says that we should love one another as He has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must be of this David, or beloved, character. The spirit of love must be in them—love for the Lord and love one for the other; else they are none of His.

In seeking the Lord's anointed, who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren as too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord has chosen for His Heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of His brethren, and when the suggestion was made that He should be the Lord's Anointed, His people hid, as it were, their faces from Him—disdained Him, despised Him, and considered Him hopeless respecting anything great or glorious—"a root out of a dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of His Body, the elect Church. They also have been despised and rejected of men; and of them the Apostle declares, "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things"—for Christ's sake, for the Truth's sake. —1 Corinthians 4:13.

Who Can Read the Heart?

Again he declares, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." St. James asks, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him!" This principle of the Divine selection of things that are not esteemed amongst men, to bring to naught the things that are esteemed by men, is noticeable. Often have we, like the Prophet Samuel, looked about amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the Kingdom—socially, intellectually, morally, educationally—and in the esteem of men, and have expected that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness and grant them a knowledge of the Truth pertaining to the Kingdom, only to find ourselves mistaken and to get a fresh lesson on the fact that God looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

We concede that we are unable to read the heart; but we are fully satisfied to accept the Divine decision in such matters and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present life shall be disclosed we shall then be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now. We shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those whom the Lord accepted and the hearts of those outwardly humble, whom He did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept His decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when He said, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." . . .

Often have we thought, as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord's people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well educated or refined—but nevertheless bearing the marks of the anointing of the Lord, the light of the Truth shining in their faces, the confidence and hope of the Truth inspiring them, and their lives indicating a transformation from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son—often have we thought that had the Lord sent us forth to seek His Bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of His choice jewels and have gathered in some whom He rejects as unworthy—because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for His leading in respect to our labors as His servants—just as the Prophet Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.

A Picture of the Millennium

Samuel's words, "We will not sit down until he come hither," referred to the feast of which they were about to partake. It was the custom that, after the sacrifice had been offered, the sanctified persons present and those in spirit sharing in the sacrifice might join in a feast, eating the flesh and thus celebrating a communion with the Lord. It was this feast that the Prophet decided should not be commenced until David's arrival. Indeed, by reason of being the Lord's anointed, he would be the most important person present at the gathering.

Perhaps in this also we can see a figure of the Lord's blessing in the Divine Plan. A feast of fat things has been designed for the whole world of mankind. But the feast cannot be participated in until the justifying and sanctifying sacrifice has been killed. More than this, the feast cannot be commenced until first the Anointed One shall come and shall receive the anointing. The anointing began with our Lord, the Head of the Church, and throughout the Gospel Age has been flowing down upon the members of His Body, the Church. The Sacrifice has been killed; and we, as members of Christ, have been participating in the sacrifice. Shortly the whole matter will have been accomplished: and then, as the Lord's anointed, the feast of fat things will be spread—the Anointed One, Head and Body, being the principal in that great antitypical feast.

The blessing and power of the Lord accompanied David's anointing in some manner—just how we may not understand: for the manifestation of the Spirit was not the same then as it is with the Church, since Pentecost. (John 7:39.) However, in some manner God's blessing and power were with David, enabling him to progress in knowledge, etc., and preparing him for the duties of the office to which he had been anointed. May we not consider as an antitype to this, the anointing which comes upon the Church from the time of her acceptance with the Lord? Ours is not a physical anointing nor are the blessings conferred of a temporal character. It is as New Creatures that we are anointed, that we grow in grace, knowledge and love; and it is as New Creatures that by and by we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the Throne with our Lord and Master as our Head—Z. '15:88-90.

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Every true child of God is the Lord's in the particular sense of having entered into a Covenant of Sacrifice. We should always remember this. Thus we undoubtedly come to see that all "the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way." "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken." (Psalm 37:23; 34:20.) The Lord will surely direct the path of such. The Master emphasized His peculiar and personal interest in each of His followers. He calls Himself their Shepherd, and says, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." (John 10:3.) This means a very special supervision of the affairs and interests of each one of His true disciples. Whatever may come to these is not a matter of chance or luck.—Z. '15:187.

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It is the specially loyal and ardent that the Adversary seeks most persistently to entrap. As Jesus explained to St. Peter, "Satan hath desired to have thee that he might sift thee" (Luke 22:31); that he might separate you from your loyalty to Christ and discourage you from discipleship, overwhelming you with fear and with your own weaknesses. The Master added, "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." We may well understand that the same loving Master still assists all of his true, warmhearted followers, whatever their weaknesses of heredity. He is able to make all things work together for their good—even the weaknesses of heredity may work out for the faithful that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which the Lord has promised.—Z. '10:360.

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Can any one who understands the divine plan doubt that John the Baptist, faithful until death, will be one of the princes whom the Lord of glory will appoint in the future for the guidance and direction of the world's affairs and for the uplift of the groaning creation? To such sterling characters the Lord can entrust much of his work, and we, perceiving the Lord's selection for the same, can have all the greater confidence in the grand outcome of that work in God's due time.—Z. '06:155.

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When Abraham and his company had come into the land of Canaan under the Lord's direction, he settled for awhile at Shechem, that portion subsequently known as Samaria. But he did not remain there long, for, as we read, the Canaanite was still in the land. It was doubtless to be free from the immoral influences of the Canaanites, and to have his people separated from these, that Abraham removed subsequently to the mountainous country near Bethel. There he established his home, there he reared an altar to the Lord and prayed. Would that each head of a family were thus careful to look out for the interests of those under his charge, that these interests should be advantageous to their welfare everywhere! Would that more could realize how indispensable it is to have an altar to the Lord in their home, where the prayer incense would ascend to the Father through the merit of the Redeemer. The true altar not having been provided of the Lord, Abraham and others of his time reared altars of stone for use in the Lord's worship. But we have the Golden altar of the Holy, and are permitted to offer thereupon, as members of the body of the great High Priest, under him as our head and glorious representative.—Z. '07:42.

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Let us daily gather our portion of manna and daily seek to use it all, and realize that it will be our portion until we reach the heavenly Canaan. Surely all the supply of divine grace experienced by the Lord's faithful should be stimulating to our faith and confidence in him who has called us from darkness into his marvelous light.—Z. '07:186.

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J. P. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 114

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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"Come, My People"

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."—Isa. 26: 20.

THERE is an affectionate tenderness about these words of our Heavenly Father which helps us to realize his great love for his people, and his special care over them. Through his prophet, taking the standpoint of the end of this age, he is forewarning us of a great time of trouble which is just imminent (verses 5, 6, 21)—"a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," when the whole present order of things, civil, social and religious, shall be swept with the besom of destruction. Yet in the midst of it all he would have his people in rest and peace in him, as saith the prophet, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."—Verses 3, 4.

And again the Lord had another of his prophets put into our mouths those beautiful words of trust and confidence—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth [the present social order] be removed, and though the mountains [governments] be carried into the midst of the sea [overthrown by the turbulent sea of world-wide anarchy]; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swellings thereof. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psa. 46.) Surely, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."—Psa. 103:13.

But while appreciating very gratefully this special love and care for us as his people, in the comfort, encouragement and protection afforded us by our Heavenly Father in the midst of the world's great tribulation, we would come far short of having his spirit if we should regard the matter with self-complacency, forgetful of his great love for the whole world also, which, vailed behind the clouds of his righteous indignation against their sins, in wisdom strikes the heavy blow which will shatter all their idols and humble their pride in the dust, that so the sore wounds of his wrath may prepare for their everlasting healing. If God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish [eternally], but have everlasting life," he loves them still and it is his love that wields the rod for their correction. So also would he have his people regard his judgments, and while rejoicing in the sunshine of his favor, because by faith and obedience they have come into an attitude which can receive it, he would have them share his spirit towards the world. . . .

But who are those whom the Lord is pleased to designate by the endearing name, "My people?" Does this class include every one upon whom his name is named? No, for that would include a great number of false professors. As the Psalmist expresses it, it includes all those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5)—all the consecrated and faithful children of God, however young or weak they may be, whose hearts are fixed firmly and resolutely to be true loyal and obedient children by his assisting grace.

To be numbered among the people of God is a very great privilege; but it means much more than many seem to understand—much more both on their part, and on God's part. On their part, it signifies, not merely a name to live, in some great organization which bears the Christian name, but that they have become sons and heirs of God through Christ, that they have fully consecrated themselves to God to follow in the footsteps of his dear Son, that they have renounced the vain pomp and glory of the world and have solemnly covenanted to live apart from its spirit, ambitions, hopes and aims; and not only so, but that, in pursuance of that covenant, they are striving daily to be faithful, and meekly to take up their cross and follow their leader and head, Christ Jesus.

On God's part it signifies the fulfilment of all his gracious promises to such through Christ, both for the life that now is, and for that which is to come. It signifies that in the present life we have his fatherly love, care, discipline, counsel, teaching, protection and encouragement to the end, and that afterwards we shall be received into his glorious presence and everlasting rest and joy and peace. Oh, how blessed to be the people of God! even in the present life the reward of his favor is beyond computation. Through all the age God has permitted his people to be scattered as sheep in the midst of wolves, and as wheat in the midst of tares; but now their gathering together unto him is due. They have grown in the midst of that great organization, which God calls Babylon (confusion), but which men call Christendom (Christ's Kingdom). Upon this great system which has appropriated the name of Christ while misrepresenting his teaching and his spirit (although in possession of His Word of truth) . . . God is about to pour his indignation, which will involve the whole world with it. . . . Having called them to come out of Babylon, he calls them also to come into another place, or condition rather—"Enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself . . . until the indignation be overpast."

The place of hiding is the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty. (Psa. 91:1-9.) This secret place of the Most High, Beloved, is the place of intimate communion and fellowship with God, through the blessed privilege of prayer and through faith in his precious Word and his promised providential care.

"When all around our souls gives way,
He then is all our hope and stay."

Oh, how precious is this hiding place! What rest and refreshment we find in the midst of the commotion that is even now bestirring the whole world, but especially the nations of Christendom—rest from the pride and folly of man in their abortive efforts to readjust the present unsatisfactory social order; and rest from the strife of tongues in an equally vain attempt to evolve the clear principles of truth and righteousness from the present confusion of human traditions. (Psa. 31:20.) Here we find rest, peace, light and joy, which the world can neither give nor take away.

Few indeed are those who can understand our motives in thus withdrawing from the world and from the various organizations of the nominal Christian church to walk alone with God; and many are the reproaches which such must endure for his name's sake. But fear not; "shut thy doors [of faith] about thee," and heed not the reproaches; turn a deaf ear to them, and "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isa. 8:13); and, "Above all, take [for the conflict before you] the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

It is well, especially in this time of greatest need, that the Lord's people should consider the value of this portion of the Christian's armor, and that the doors of their faith should thoroughly shut them in to the secret place of the Most High. When the reproaches fall thick and fast, when they are told that they have left the faith and gone after fables, that they have incurred the Lord's displeasure, and that their sufferings for Christ's sake are the penalties they deserve, when their names are cast out as evil and they are separated from the company of those whom they have previously regarded as the Lord's people, because they bear his name, ah, then is the time for firmly grasping the shield of faith and for adopting the triumphant language of the Psalmist:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. . . . In time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me upon a rock. . . . When my father and my mother [my most trusted human friends] forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."—Psa. 27:1, 3, 5, 10; 23:1, 4; also 56:4.

It is to inspire such a faith as this that the Lord has offered us, in addition to all his precious promises, so many encouragements to simple, childlike trust in him, and that he has bidden us turn a deaf ear to the reproaches of men, saying—"Hearken unto me, **ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law**; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. . . . I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgetest the Lord, thy Maker, that has stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? . . . I have put **my words** in thy mouth, and I have **covered thee in the shadow of mine hand**, that I may plant the heavens [establish the new heavens], and lay the foundations of the earth [the new earth], and say unto Zion [the people tried and proved by these afflictions to be the worthy heirs of the new Kingdom—the new heavens and earth], Thou art **my people**."—Isa. 51:7, 12, 13, 16.

What condescension on the part of the Almighty to thus consider our weakness when the darts of the enemy wound our hearts, and to pour in the balm of his consolation. He would not have one of his children whom Christ has made free to come again under the bondage of "the fear of man which bringeth a snare." (Prov. 29:25.) He would have every man in Christ realize his liberty from sin and superstition and his solemn accountability to God for all his thoughts and words and doings.—"Sanctify **the Lord of hosts himself**, and let **him** be your fear, and let **him** be your dread."

Just here the words of the Apostle Paul (1 Thess. 5:21; Gal. 6:4) are worthy of special notice—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," and "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another." Thus every individual in Christ is reminded of his own personal responsibility in matters of faith and conduct. Not until he has proved what is truth and righteousness, accepting the Word of God as the only standard of authority, is it proper to take a resolute stand; but, having proved "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," nothing should be able to unsettle his faith or turn him from the line of duty, and no fear of man should bring him again into the snare of bondage to superstition or human traditions or opinions of others. If each individual prove his own work—his faith in the doctrines and his conduct in life—by the square and compass of God's Word, "then shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another"—i.e., his faith, no matter through what privileged human agent or agency it may have been received, will be so established by the Word of the Lord that it will be his own, and in no sense dependent upon another.

It was the neglect of this principle, of the right and duty of the individual judgment in proving all things by the inspired Word, that brought upon the Church the snare of the great apostacy, which set up infamous popes to dictate in matters of faith and conduct and subvert the consciences of men. Let us remember the command, "Sanctify **the Lord of hosts himself**, and let **him** be your fear, and let **him** be your dread." Let us fear and dread to displease him; let us see to it that we know and love righteousness and that we have the law of God, not in our heads only, but also in our hearts, for so shall we ever find acceptance with him; and to such, who in faith continually rely upon the Lord, who go forth, strong in the strength which he supplies through faith, to do valiant service for truth and righteousness, comes also the blessed assurance," Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

While the storm of trouble that is to engulf the whole world will affect all men, both individually and collectively, the Lord's people, who seek only to draw yet closer to him, entering more fully into the secret place of communion and fellowship and rest in him, and shutting the doors of faith about them, will there be safely hidden from the alarm and fear and trembling that will take hold upon all other classes; and while they patiently endure its effects upon their temporal interests, they will rejoice not only in the knowledge of God's overruling providence, in the whirlwind and in the storm as well as in the calms of life, but also in his blessed assurance that his wrath will be thus revealed only **"for a little moment,"** and then will his righteous Kingdom be manifested in power and great glory, and they shall shine forth as the sun.

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Oh blessed invitation! Lord, we will trust in the covert of thy wings.—Z. '95: 72-74.

Disciples of Christ

S 7

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
—John 8: 31, 32.

OUR Lord's preaching always produced two opposite effects upon the promiscuous multitudes that heard him. It attracted one class and repelled another. Those who were full of pride and conceit, and who preferred darkness to light because their deeds were evil, and because they realized that if they admitted the light of truth they must of necessity conform their characters to it,—all such were repelled by the teachings of Christ. And if the Lord had undertaken the work of the ministry according to the methods pursued today, depending for support on the good will and contributions of the people, that support would often have been very meager, or, at least, very fluctuating. On some occasions multitudes received his testimony, and later deserted him and walked no more with him, as he continued to enforce the lessons of divine truth. (Luke 4:14, 15, 22, 28, 29.) Sometimes the multitudes hung upon his words, wondering at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth: and again and again they forsook him, while only a mere handful remained. (John 6: 60, 66-69.) . . .

Those who followed the Lord only for a little season and then forsook him, of course, ceased then to be his disciples and were no longer so recognized; nor did they presume longer to claim to be his disciples. A disciple is a pupil, a learner; and when any man ceases to be a student and pupil of Christ, the great Teacher, he is no longer a disciple of Christ. This was very manifest when the Lord was present, and when his name was one of reproach among men; but later, when his presence was withdrawn, and when his doctrines were unscrupulously mixed with human philosophies to such an extent as to divest them of their reproach, and to make them really void, then men began to claim to be his disciples — long after they had utterly repudiated his doctrines.

The Lord's expression—"disciples indeed"—implies a distinction between real and merely nominal disciples. And since we desire to continue to be his real, sincere disciples, let us mark the expressed condition: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." The hypocrisy of merely nominal discipleship is an abomination to the Lord.

It is a blessed thing to take the first step in the Christian life—that of belief in and acceptance of Christ as our Redeemer and Lord; but the reward of this step depends entirely upon our **continuance** in his Word, in the attitude of true disciples. It is not difficult to do this, yet the disposition of human pride is to wander away from the simplicity of divine truth and to seek out new theories and philosophies of our own, or to pry into those of other men, who desire to be considered wise and great according to this world's estimate.

The reward of continued discipleship is, "Ye shall know the truth"—not that we shall be "ever seeking and never coming to a knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3: 7.) Here is the mistake that many make: failing to continue in the Word of the Lord, they delve into various human philosophies which ignore or pervert the Word of the Lord and set up opposing theories. There is no promise, to those who seek for truth among these, that they shall ever find it. And they never do. Divine truth is never found except in the divinely appointed channels: and those channels are the Lord and the apostles and prophets. To continue in the doctrine set forth in their inspired writings, to study and meditate upon them, to trust implicity in them, and faithfully to conform our characters to them, is what is implied in continuing in the Word of the Lord.

But the idea is entirely compatible with that of heeding all the helps which the Lord from time to time raises up from among our brethren in the body of Christ, as enumerated by the Apostle Paul. (Eph. 4:11-15; 1 Cor. 12:13, 14.) The Lord always has raised up, and will to the end raise up, such helps for the edification of the body of Christ; but it is the duty of every member to prove carefully their teaching by the infallible Word.

If we thus continue in the Word of the Lord, as earnest and sincere disciples, we shall indeed "know the truth," be "established in the present truth" (the truth due), and be "rooted and grounded in the truth;" we shall be "firm in the faith," and "able to give a reason for the hope that is in us," to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," to war a good warfare," to "witness a good confession," and firmly to "endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," even unto the end of our course. We will not come into the knowledge of the truth at a single bound: but gradually, step by step, we will be led into the truth. Every step will be one of sure and certain progress, and each one leading to a higher vantage ground for further attainments both in knowledge and in its blessed fruits of established character.

The truth thus acquired, step by step, becomes a sanctifying power bringing forth in our lives its blessed fruits of righteousness, peace, joy in the holy Spirit, love, meekness, faith, patience and every virtue and every grace, which time and cultivation will ripen to a glorious maturity.

And not only shall the true disciple thus know the truth and be sanctified by it, but the Lord also said, "The truth shall make you free." Those who have received the truth know by blessed experience something of its liberating power. As soon as any measure of it is received into a good and honest heart, it begins to strike off the fetters of sin, of ignorance and superstition, and of fear. It throws its health-restoring beams into the darkest recesses of our hearts and minds, and thus invigorates the whole being. Sin cannot endure its light; and those who continue to live in sin when a sufficiency of light has been received to manifest its deformity must inevitably lose the light because they are unworthy of it.

Ignorance and superstition must vanish before the light of truth. And what a blessed realization it is to be thus liberated! Millions are still under this galling yoke. Under its delusions they fear and reverence some of the basest tools of Satan for their oppression and degradation, because they hypocritically claim divine appointment; and they have been made to fear God as a vengeful tyrant consigning the vast majority of his creatures to an eternity of torment. Thank God, we who have received the truth have escaped that terrible nightmare, and the bondage of Satan over us is broken!

We are made free, too, from the fear that we now see coming upon the whole world, as the great civil and ecclesiastical systems that have so long ruled the world are being terribly shaken. All thinking people are in dread of the possible outcome of anarchy and terror. And the alarm of all will increase as we near the awful crisis toward which we are rapidly hastening, and as the danger becomes more and more visible. Yet, in the midst of it all, and with the fullest assurance of the infallible Word of God of the terrors of the conflict through which the world will have to pass within a few years, the true disciples of Christ who abide in his Word are not afraid, but rejoice, because they know that God's object in permitting the storm is to clear the moral atmosphere of the world, and that, after the storm, there shall come, by his providence, an abiding peace. Instructed in the truth, they realize the necessities of the situation, and have confidence in the divine providence that can make even the wrath of man to praise him.

Blessed promise!—"If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Dearly beloved, having received this favor from the Lord, shall we not continue in it, giving no heed to seducing doctrines? And shall we not be faithful to it under all circumstances, defending it against every assault, and with it bearing its reproach? Let us prove our appreciation of it by our loyalty and faithfulness to it.—Z. '03:61, 62.

Jehovah's Temple

2 Samuel 6:4-16.

"Thy throne shall be established forever."—2 Sam. 7:16.

DAVID, during the first six years of his reign over all Israel, was kept actively engaged in resisting the enemies of Israel and enlarging the borders of the nation, in harmony with the original divine grant. Having to a considerable extent accomplished these things, and having built for himself a palace in Jerusalem, the reverential elements of his nature noticed the inconsistency of his dwelling in a palace while the typical residence of Israel's great King, Jehovah, was but the Tabernacle tent. His reverential impulses promptly suggested the building of a temple to replace the Tabernacle, and properly enough he consulted the Prophet Nathan, who rejoiced in this manifestation of the King's loyalty to the Lord, and indorsed the program. That same night, however, the Lord gave the prophet a message for the King, which, although it showed appreciation of David's intentions, forbade their execution, explaining that the reason that the Lord's presence was manifested in a tent, and not a permanent structure, was not because the Lord had not thought of this, nor because others of his servants would not have been glad to have erected such a structure at his bidding, but because the divine plan was otherwise. The Tabernacle was for the time being preferred, for certain reasons not explained at the time. The Lord, however, did assure David that by and by he would have a permanent temple, and that David's successor and son should erect it.

The Lord's people may learn a valuable lesson from this incident. We are not to conclude that, because our plans and projects are reverential and designed to be for the glory of God, therefore they must have the divine approval. With spiritual Israel, as with David, it is frequently true that "My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts [plans] as your thoughts [plans]; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord." Those who are of David's disposition—"after God's own heart"—will not only consult with those whose judgment they would consider helpful, as David consulted with Nathan, but if subsequently the Lord rejects their best judgment, and does not co-operate in the execution of their plans, will do as David did in this instance: they will unmurmuringly acquiesce in the Lord's plans, and co-operate therewith, and thus further attest that they are of the kind the Lord loves to honor and call Beloved. To these also the Lord will grant other special blessings and favors, as he did to David.

The spirit of David in this matter—his desire to honor the Lord and to build him a great house or temple—finds its parallel in the heart sentiments of every true Christian. We do not refer to those who merely take pleasure in erecting grand temples of stone, but specially to those whose ambition it would be to organize the Church of the present time—to glory in its grandeur and completeness of organization and function and service for the Lord. Those not in the right condition of heart, heady, self-willed, confident that their good intentions must be pleasing to the Lord, have proceeded to build various structures, each claiming his to be the temple of the Lord. As they have neither sought nor received divine instruction on the subject, but are following their own ideals, there is necessarily considerable diversity in these buildings, each seeming to its builders to be the right, proper and appropriate temple of God. These temples now number hundreds, the larger and more imposing ones being the Roman Catholic temple, the Greek Catholic temple, the Church of England temple, the Methodist temple, the Lutheran temple, the Presbyterian temple, the Baptist temple, the Congregational temple, etc., etc.

But a small class follow the example of David, and receive instruction from the Lord to the effect that the present is not the time for temple-building; that he could have built his temple heretofore, and found many willing to serve him in this respect, but that he prefers that his representation in the world in the present time shall be extremely simple and unostentatious. Such receive of the Lord assurances, however, that in his own time and way, under a succeeding form of the Kingdom, a much more glorious temple shall be constituted than would be possible for us to build at the present time—an enduring temple which shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. All who are of the Davidic character, of the disposition beloved of the Father—will, as soon as they learn of the divine purpose, promptly submit themselves, and co-operate in the divine plan. That plan in the type was that David, as the man of war, battling for the right, and severely tried and disciplined, should represent the saints of God in the present militant condition, warring with the world, the flesh and the devil, and becoming in their own hearts and faith strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. According to the same type it is the mission of the present time to prepare the gold, silver and precious things for the future temple—ready for its construction. In the type these were literal things, but in the antitype, as the Apostle shows, the Lord's saints are the gold, silver and precious stones, which very shortly now, in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, will be all thoroughly organized on the plane of glory, honor and immortality, and filled eternally with the life and glory of the Father. As David and his work of preparing for the temple, typifies the Church in this present time, and our work of preparing ourselves and each other for the glories to follow, so Solomon's Kingdom which followed represents the Kingdom of the glorified Christ—the real Kingdom, of which the present is but the embryo, and the construction of Solomon's Temple typifies the resurrection of the Church, in which all the members shall come together in glorious completeness, in the morning of the Millennial day. "Weeping may endure for a night [in connection with our fightings with foes without and within, and suffering for righteousness' sake], but joy cometh in the morning [when that which is perfect shall have come, and when that which is in part shall have been done away]." (Psa. 30:5.) "God shall help her [the Church, the Bride of Christ], and that right early"—in the morning.—Psa. 46:5.—Z. '03:392, 393.

God's Plan and the Lower Animals

MANY friends of the Truth have queried whether or not God's plan reveals any provision for the lower animals. They query whether or not there will be deaths among the lower animals during the Millennium and if so if that would not cause pain to their human friends, etc.

Scripture promises are addressed only to man and refer to the lower animals only as they stand related to man's welfare. For instance, the promise that the lion shall eat straw like the ox and lie down peaceably with the lamb, is for man's comfort and assurance, and by no means implies everlasting life to the lamb. Altho all animals have suffered by the fall of man, it is indirectly, in that their ruler, their king, lost his balance, his full sanity, and hence has been unable to regulate and govern properly his subjects. Restitution times therefore will bring its blessings chiefly to man, who because of his much higher and finer organism has suffered by his degradation and death sentence immeasurably more than the brutes.

We may expect death among the lower animals during the Millennium as they shall live out their periods of usefulness. And by reason of the contrast the everlasting life provided for man (made in God's image) will be the more appreciated. Since summer and winter are to continue (Gen. 8:22) we may know that the flowers and all vegetation will likewise die and revive perennially, reminding restored and perfected man of the blessed change that came to him by divine grace through Jesus, his Redeemer and Lord.

These conditions prevailing in the animal and vegetable worlds will bring no pain, neither sorrow nor crying (Rev. 21:4) because all of the former things will have passed away. Amongst these will be present misconceptions by which we are inclined to attribute to the lower animals human feelings and sentiments — some even carrying these mistaken notions to flowers — loving and talking to their flowers as others do to a pet dog — imagining reciprocal feelings and sentiments.

Restitution will not only bring to men greater knowledge but also sounder minds, in harmony with the divine mind,—so that their loves and hopes, like the divine promises, will measurably pass by the lower creatures and think and plan for and be absorbed in uplifting man—"the groaning creation." And already those who receive a knowledge of the divine plan and with it the spirit of the Lord, find themselves no longer disposed to waste valuable time and affection upon dogs, flowers, etc., while the Lord's "brethren" need sympathy and aid and counsel in the narrow way, and while mankind in general are in so deplorable a condition as at present — mental, moral and physical. And such a change of sentiment is an evidence of their attaining more of "the spirit of a sound mind."—See 2 Tim. 1:7.—Z. '00:166.

"The Little Foxes"

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."—Canticles 2:15.

IN the above text the word "take" is used in the sense of catch — help us to catch the foxes, especially the little foxes. The fox is known as a very cunning, but docile little animal, not capable of ferocity and viciousness, but nevertheless the cause of much harm. Its very appearance of harmlessness makes it the more dangerous. The young fox, like all the young of the dog family, is very destructive in its character; and the fox is particularly cunning and crafty when bent on mischief, hence less likely to arouse suspicion of its evil intentions. It has a peculiar simplicity of manner; it attracts by its apparent innocence, and is all the more apt to deceive.

In our text King Solomon seems to be picturing the depravities of our fallen nature which are not so extreme, not so gross, as some, but which are none the less very harmful; indeed they are especially deceitful and likely to elude our attention, and for this reason need more careful and constant watching. He emphasizes the expression, "the little foxes," and intimates that they would be very destructive.

If we apply the term to sins, we find that there are little sins which are really more dangerous than grosser sins, because we are less likely to be on our guard against these than against the greater sins. Every one would be instinctively on guard against lions, bears, serpents, etc., but little foxes are so attractive-looking and seem so artless in disposition that unless one has had bitter experience with them he would have little or no fear. But these little animals are much given to scratching and generally destroying everything with which they come in contact.

Guard Carefully the "Tender Grapes"

In this illustration of the wise man the grapevine is spoken of, as though these foxes have a special predilection for grapes—the grapes representing the fruits of the Holy Spirit. As these little foxes delight to tear the vine with their sharp claws and to gnaw the roots with their teeth, so small sins tear the branches and gnaw at the roots of the spiritual vine, thus endangering its very life. They destroy or devour the precious grapes, which are very tender. . . .

Every child of God should be especially on guard against the little things—the things that seem like jokes, which sometimes do more harm in the Church than things which appear great: the little insinuations, that often leave a sting; the jesting about sacred matters, turning Scriptural passages into jests; the little acts of selfishness, etc. These things and many others which by careful thought each one may note really do much damage, injuring the branches and destroying the precious fruits of the Lord's Vine. Then let us, dear brethren, strive to be more and more watchful to catch these "little foxes." Let us each, individually, watch and pray that we do not by thought or word or act of ours hinder or lessen our own fruit-bearing or that of another.

It is difficult for us to realize how potent is our influence for either good or evil in matters which, unless carefully scrutinized, seem trifling. Ah, these little foxes! Careless words, spoken with scarcely a thought or in a moment of impatience, little grumblings, a sarcastic word or laugh or look or shrug—oh, how these things count in our daily lives either for or against our own spiritual development, and often the development of others! How earnestly we should each seek to upbuild our own character and the characters of the brethren! Our Lord is marking all these things. Remember, "He that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much."—Z. '16:118, 119.

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"Procrastination is the thief of time," is an old proverb and a true one: and time lost means opportunities lost, and the advantages and privileges which went with the opportunities, also lost.—Z. '03:91.

The Disappointed Prophet's Wise Course

Luke 7:18-28.

7

"He hath done all things well."—Mark 7:37.

WHILE Jesus was performing many miracles, making numerous disciples, and meeting with comparatively little opposition, things were going very differently with his cousin, John the Baptiser. Yet this was only in accordance with what John himself had prophesied, saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John was in prison, about 120 miles from where Jesus was laboring so successfully. To be shut up in a dark dungeon of the kind usual at that time, and to have our Lord proceeding with his work, and raising no voice of protest on his behalf, and exercising none of his mighty power for his deliverance, probably seemed very strange to John—especially in view of his expectations respecting the work of the Messiah—that he would be a great earthly general and king, in harmony with the general Jewish expectations.

We see how readily John might have permitted doubts and fears to enter his mind. He might have said, This whole matter is a fraud, and Jesus and I have been deceiving ourselves. He might have lost all faith in God's providential dealings in the past and all heart and hope for the present and for the future; but notwithstanding the great disappointment he felt, his faith continued its firm hold on the Lord. This is indicated in his sending of his disciples to Jesus, to make inquiry, and also in the character of the inquiry. He does not say, Is this whole matter a farce, and are we deluded? but on the contrary his question was a sound one, and expresses the conviction that thus far the Lord has been leading, and that the only doubt in the prophet's mind was whether or not, as he was the forerunner of Jesus, Jesus in turn, greater than he, might be the forerunner of some one else still greater and yet to come. And strictly speaking this was exactly the case; for Jesus in the flesh was indeed the forerunner and preparer of the way before the still greater glorified Christ of the second advent, who will accomplish the great and wonderful things foretold by all the holy prophets since the world began.—Act 3:21-23.

Our Lord, it will be noticed, did not answer John's question directly—he did not say that there was not another coming and still greater work than that which he was performing, but he did give John to understand distinctly that the work he was then doing was the very work which had been foretold in the prophets, and the proper thing to be done at that time. While John's messengers were with Jesus a number of miracles were performed in their sight, and Jesus sent them back to John with instructions that they bear witness to him of the work of the Lord progressing in his hands, and to say to John that while the opportunities to stumble at Jesus, his work and his words, were many, and while many would stumble at these, as the prophet had declared (Isa. 8:14) yet a special blessing would rest upon all who would not stumble, but whose faith in the Lord would continue, despite various disappointments of expectation respecting his work and their fulfilments — through misapprehension of the lengths and breadths, heights and depths of the divine plan, which, as the heavens are higher than the earth, were higher than human conception could have foreseen. For instance, what Jew could have thought for a moment of the still higher than Jewish expectations of the Kingdom—of the spiritual Kingdom-class to be selected first before the establishment of the earthly kingdom, and to be sharers with Messiah in his glory, honor and immortality?

All of the Lord's faithful servants need to remember the same lessons which were thus forcefully impressed upon John: they need to remember that when sometimes matters turn out very differently with themselves than what they had expected, when they receive injuries, reproaches and oppression, as the rewards of faithfulness to duty and to truth, it does not mean that God has forgotten them, nor that they were misled in their previous service to the Lord; nor does it mean that the Lord has changed his plan; nor that he is careless or indifferent respecting their condition. True, their first thought should be whether or not present unfavorable conditions are in the nature of chastisements or the results of any misdoings on their part, or failures to serve the Lord in his own way, but if they find their course to be harmonious with the divine will and Word they should at once rest their faith upon the Lord, and conclude that God knows better than they how to manage his own work. Then while thankful to be used in that work for a time they should nevertheless be pleased, if it were the Lord's will, to be set aside for a time—perhaps for the good of others, or perhaps for their own training in the school of experience, and in the learning of lessons of patience and of faith.

But such a resting in the Lord, such a centering of life in him, can be enjoyed only by those who have made considerable progress, who have run a considerable distance in the way of the Lord, and who have already been exercised under the Lord's providences, and have learned many lessons in his school. This, however, is the condition which all of the Lord's true followers are to strive to attain, as the only one thoroughly pleasing to the Lord. The proper course of all God's servants when perplexed is the one followed by John, namely, to go to the Lord with the perplexity—not doubtingly, but inquiringly—and be set at rest by his Word. We may not be able to hear the Lord's words with our own ears, but we can receive it second hand as did John,—through the testimonies of the Apostles and prophets, by whose writings God has provided in advance replies to all proper queries.

The question arises, was John imprisoned on account of officiousness—on account of trying to mind Herod's business? Or was he imprisoned because of his faithfulness in the discharge of that duty? Was it right or was it wrong for him to reprove the king, and to say to him that it was not lawful for him to take as his wife his brother Philip's wife? There is no question that Herod was in the wrong, and that John's expression on the subject was a correct one, but the question is, Was this any of John's business? Did he need to meddle with the king's affairs, and thus get himself into trouble? And if it was John's duty to reprove Herod on this subject, was it not the duty of our Lord Jesus to have done the same, and in addition to have uttered a protest against the imprisonment of John, and in general to have raised a great hubbub over the injustice being done by the wicked ruler? And if John was right in this matter was our Lord Jesus wrong in not following the same course? Or if Jesus was right in not following John's course in reproving Herod, does it prove that John erred in giving the reproof?

We answer that our Lord's conduct is certainly to be considered as above reproach, since "in him was no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" but this does not prove guile and sin on John's part in following a different course. We are to remember that in many respects John and his ministry differed widely from our Lord and his ministry. For instance, the uncouth skin-girdle which John wore was very different from the seamless robe which the Lord wore; and the Scriptures call attention to the fact that John lived a very abstemious life, "neither eating nor drinking" ordinary food, but practicing a continual fasting or self-denial as respects these comforts, while our Lord Jesus came "both eating and drinking," attended wedding feasts, and banquets made in his honor. The lesson is that these grand characters each fulfilled his own mission, according to the divine arrangement, but that they had different missions. John's mission was pre-eminently that of a reprover and reformer, and we are to understand that as a prophet he was supernaturally guided in respect to the various features of the course which he took. Our Lord's mission, on the contrary, was a different one: he was gathering to himself those whom John's ministry served to arouse to righteousness and to zeal to know and do the Lord's will.

We who are called to be the "body" of Christ and to follow him, may learn a lesson in this as respects our proper course: we are not sent forth as John was, to dwell in the wilderness, living and dressing uncouthly, and to criticise and denounce everything and everybody. Some of the Lord's dear people fail to notice that such commissions are special and very rare, and sometimes in following the wrong copy, undesignedly bring reproach upon the Lord's cause. We are to be copies of God's dear Son, our Lord, and not to be copies of John the Baptiser. We are not to stir up strife by trying to mind other people's business, nor to seek to govern all the affairs of this world, reproving emperors, kings, governors, etc., but to the contrary of this are exhorted by the Apostle to remember that what God sees fit to permit we can see fit to endure.

Even tho we find many things which we cannot commend or indorse, we may equally find ourselves able to avoid any special denunciation of them—especially of things which have no bearing whatever upon the proper understanding and fulfilling of the Lord's Word. The Apostle points out our proper position, saying, "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." And our Lord emphasized the same thought, saying "Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God."

Some of the holiest of the Lord's people err on this subject in their own families, and needlessly arouse prejudice and opposition, and make their homes unhappy, by continually finding fault with things which tho not up to the standard of saintliness and cross-bearing, are nevertheless not immoral or wicked even in tendency. Parents and guardians are surely to guard against all tendencies toward immorality, etc., but to find fault with those they love merely because they are only nominal Christians and have the spirit of worldliness, is certainly unwise. Their general life of peace and joy in the holy spirit is the very best reproof of worldliness they can give and the best recommendation of the glorious gospel they profess. This is the epistle that will be read, the light that will reprove darkness. In other words, we must not expect from nor try to force upon the unconsecrated the details of our own self-denials. We must wait until they shall see full consecration to be their "reasonable service" and present their bodies living sacrifices to God. Pastors and teachers, however, should seek to keep continually before the Lord's consecrated flock the high Scripture standard, realizing that many influences are continually at work to lower the standard of holiness and devotion.—Z. '00:125-127.

The Secret of a Happy Day

Just to let thy Father do what he will;
Just to know that he is true, and be still.
Just to follow, hour by hour, as he leadeth;
Just to draw the moment's power, as it needeth.
Just to trust him, this is all. Then the day will
surely be
Peaceful, whatso'er befall, bright and blessed, calm
and free.

Just to let him speak to thee through his Word,
Watching, that his voice may be clearly heard.
Just to tell him everything, as it rises,
And at once to him to bring all surprises.
Just to listen, and to stay where you cannot miss
his voice.
This is all! and thus today, you communing, shall
rejoice.

Just to ask him what to do all the day,
And to make you quick and true to obey.
Just to know the needed grace he bestoweth,
Every bar of time and place overfloweth.
Just to take thy orders straight from the Master's
own command.
Blessed day! when thus we wait always at our
Sovereign's hand.

Just to recollect his love, always true;
Always shining from above, always new.
Just to recognize its light, all-enfolding;
Just to claim its present might, all-upholding.
Just to know it as thine own, that no power can
take away:
Is not this enough alone for the gladness of the day?

Just to trust, and yet to ask guidance still;
Take the training or the task, as he will.
Just to take the loss or gain, as he sends it;
Just to take the joy or pain, as he lends it.
He who formed thee for his praise will not miss
the gracious aim;
So, today, and all thy days, shall be molded for the
same.

Just to leave in his dear hand little things,
All we cannot understand, all that stings.
Just to let him take the care sorely pressing;
Finding all we let him bear changed to blessing.
This is all! and yet the way marked by him who
loves thee best:
Secret of a happy day, secret of his promised rest.
—Z. '97:145.

Gifts to Our King

Matthew 2:1-12.

Golden Text:—"My son, give me thine heart.—Prov. 23: 26.

OUR lesson is concerning the wise men of the East, who came seeking the new-born Jesus, the King of the Jews, with presents of myrrh, frankincense and gold, and doubtless we shall be able to gather from this incident some valuable suggestions respecting our obligations to the great Messiah, and the propriety of renewing these and increasing them. . . .

Myrrh, Frankincense and Gold

God chose as messengers of his good tidings not only wise men but reverential men, men of faith; and his choice of these messengers from the east to arouse the people of Judea and Jerusalem and to be heralds of the great King was not an exception to the rule. Although heathen men, in the sense of not being of the nation with which God had thus far dealt and to whom he had thus far confined his gracious promises, they were, nevertheless, good men, reverential men, who delighted to know of the coming blessing of peace on earth and good will amongst men through whatever channel or nationality the Lord should be pleased to find his representative and messenger.

In one respect many of Christendom could learn numerous important lessons from these wise Gentiles. No false patriotism stood in their way to hinder their appreciation of any manifestation of divine favor to the children of men. And when they found the Savior they were nothing daunted by the fact that his home surroundings were of the humbler sort. They worshipped him in three senses of the word: (1) They fell before him, prostrated themselves, thus physically expressing their reverence. (2) They worshipped him in their hearts and with the tongue gave expression to their rejoicing and confidence. (3) They opened their treasure-box and presented to him three gifts appropriate to royalty; the myrrh representing submission, frankincense representing praise, gold representing obedience.

"Present Your Bodies Living Sacrifices, Holy, Acceptable Unto God, Your Reasonable Service."

The reverent spirit of these noble heathen men who had so little light, so little knowledge respecting the great Messiah and his work, will bring to our cheeks the blush of shame as we reflect that, favored with still brighter light to guide us to the Lamb of God, having seen his star in a still better and truer sense, having been guided to him by the prophecies, having found him not only a babe, but one that in prospect would bear our sorrows and carry our griefs and make his soul an offering for sin, that we by his stripes might be healed, what manner of oblation should we pour at the feet of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood? With what deep reverence have we bowed the knee, prostrated ourselves, given outward evidence through our bodies of full submission to our great King, of whom we not only know but of whose gracious provisions for us and for the world of mankind we have heard, not uncertainly, but with the voice of him who speaketh from heaven? Have we offered our myrrh? Have we shown a willingness for service even to the extent of bitterness, a joy to honor the King to the extent of suffering with him? Have we worshipped him in heart, not with an outward form of godliness without the power—in other words, have we offered him the frankincense of heart adoration, appreciation, and gratitude?

Have we laid at his feet our earthly substance—our gold? Have we realized that all that we have and all that we are are offerings far too small to be worthy of acceptance by the great King Immanuel? Is this our present attitude? and will it be our attitude through coming days even until the end of the present pilgrimage?

The Apostle's words, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, your reasonable service," apply not only to the primary consecration of our hearts to the Lord, but are, as the Scriptures express it, a covenant of sacrifice, an agreement to die daily to self and to be alive daily more and more in the Lord's service, to glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his. If this has not been our attitude in the past shall it not be our future course? Shall we not in any event continue to grow in knowledge, to grow in love, in service, in worship and in the privilege of laying our little all at the feet of him who is our gracious heavenly King, whose Kingdom is so soon to be established and who has invited us to share his glory, to be participants in the great work of pouring out blessings upon the world of mankind, every kindred, people, nation and tongue?

"My Son, Give Me Thine Heart"

Our Golden Text is well worthy of our remembrance here. It is not applicable to sinners, who are not sons in any sense of the word. There is a message to sinners, namely a call to repentance, to the forsaking of sin and to the acceptance of the justification secured by the precious blood. But it is only to those who have repented of sin and who are seeking to live a repentant life and so far as possible to make restitution for wrongs of the past, and who are trusting to the precious blood of Christ—reconciled to God through the death of his Son—it is to these that this Golden Text is applicable. "My son, give me thine heart."

When we give our hearts it includes all that we have and are in the highest and noblest and fullest sense—that which was illustrated by the three gifts of the wise men is all represented in this brief statement, "Give me thine heart." Whoever gives his heart to the Lord fully and unreservedly, gives his body, gives his worship and reverence and praise, and gives his earthly treasure, time, talents, influence, money—all—to be used in joyful service for the glory of the King. . . .

To those who have already accepted the Lord's favor, who have already presented their bodies living sacrifices, who have already given the Lord their hearts, we urge a remembrance of the fact that the sacrifice once put upon the altar must remain there, and that the longer it remains the more joyful should be the service, the more appreciated every opportunity for sacrifice, the more thankful should be the heart and the more rich should be the experience in the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our hearts and preparing us more and more through the graces of the Spirit for the glorious things which God hath in reservation for them that so love him and so reverence his Son.—Z. '06:14, 15.

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There must be a determined will, a positive will for God, which will keenly regret any temporary deflection; otherwise there is no New Creature. As the battling goes on between the new will and the old body, the new will becomes stronger and stronger, if it is properly awake to the situation. Yet God may permit the flesh to have more and more severe temptations. He allows the world and the Adversary to bring pressure to bear upon the flesh, so that He may test, prove, the loyalty of the New Creature. It was because our Lord was found faithful "unto death, even the death of the cross," that He was counted worthy of the Divine nature. So it is to be with His footstep followers. The Father knows just how much we can stand, and will never suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with every temptation will provide a way of escape.—1 Corinthians 10:13.—Z. '14:118.

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There can no **"Accident"** happen to the Lord's consecrated ones, viewed from the divine standpoint. Not a hair of their heads can be injured aside from the Father's **permission,** and what God purposely permits cannot be properly considered an accident from his standpoint, nor from the standpoint of those who fully trust his providence and grace. We might even suppose a calamity in which ninety-nine children of this world and one of the Lord's consecrated met death together. It might be purely accidental so far as all but the Lord's one was concerned; but, to that one nothing could occur unforeseen of God—nothing that God could not have fully controlled, and which permitted must mean a blessing to his child who rightly and in faith accepts it.—"For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." So it was in our Lord's case. As he testified, the Jews could not touch his life before because his "hour was not yet come." And when his hour did come, our Lord testified to Pilate.—"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." The same is true of every member of the body of Christ, the royal priesthood. But this divine supervision does not watch for the unconsecrated of the world—except as they may be children of the saints, or others whose affairs and interests are interlinked with theirs.—Z. '09:256.

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"O Father, just to see Thee face to face,
E'er endless death
Should claim me for its own—
To hear Thy voice, behold Thy Throne!
And for one moment
Hear Thee call me Thine, and Thine alone!
Ah! that were worth
Long years of suffering and pain.

"But what, O God, must be the joy of this—
To see Thy face,
To feel Thy touch, and folded to Thy breast
To hear Thee say, "We ne'er shall part!"
Break not, O heart!
Though thou hast naught of worth,
Be this thy plea
God's own almighty love, and Christ's sufficiency."
—Z. '13:183.

Worship in spirit and in truth does not apply simply to prayer, praise, supplication and thanksgiving. It goes deeper than all these and takes hold upon the affections, upon the heart, and hence signifies not an "act of worship" but rather a life of worship—a life in which, through the begetting of the spirit and the knowledge of the divine plan, the individual becomes so at one with God and so in unison with the law of God and all the features of the plan of God that it is, in the words of our Lord, his meat and his drink to do the Father's will. This is worship in spirit and in truth. It will find its expression in bended knee and in orderly and reverential demeanor in approach to God in personal prayer, in family prayer and in company with the household of faith; and it will find its expression also in all the acts and words of life. The captivated heart will seek to bring every talent of the body into complete subjection to the will of God and of Christ. The whole of this is the worship which God seeketh; and, surely, only those who are thus captivated to the Lord in heart, and who serve him in spirit and in truth and endeavor to have his will done in their hearts, words and conduct, are in the full sense the true worshipers whom the Lord seeketh.—Z. '96: 287.

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It is all a mistake to suppose that childhood years must be spent in sowing wild oats or even in frivolity and play. From early infancy the thought should be instilled that life is a great privilege, a great blessing, and that every day and every hour should be used wisely and should bring some returns—to the glory of God or to our own advantage or to the advantage of others. From earliest infancy each should be taught that it is a shame and a sin to kill time, to waste time, to allow hours and days to slip by without improvement, without use in some worthy manner. The child who learns to waste time or to fritter it away in a useless and unprofitable manner is being permanently injured, and if ever he becomes useful in the world must do so by counteracting, by fighting against the wrong lessons learned in childhood.—Z. '05: 220.

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How the grace of humility shines out in all the little affairs of our dear Redeemer's ministry; even at the moment of his surrender to his enemies he does not boast that his course is a voluntary one, nor seek praise as a martyr! He declares the simple truth, that the Father required this of him as an evidence of his personal loyalty to him. He confesses himself a servant of God, a son who learned obedience by the things which he suffered. "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Indeed, this was the strength of his victory—his will was fully submitted to the Father's will, and his faith grasped the fact that the Father permitted no unnecessary evils to come upon him, but only such as he could and would overrule for good.

There is a valuable lesson here for all who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of the great High Priest. We also are to remember that so long as we abide in Christ, and seek to walk in his footsteps, all the trying experiences of life are carefully measured for us by the Lord—that he does not pour into our cup of sorrow and trial any bitter experiences that are not needful to us, and that will not subsequently work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. 4:17.) With these assurances, and with the evidences of the Father's faithfulness to our glorified Master and Forerunner, we indeed may have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel.—Heb. 6:18-20.—Z. '99:118.

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Thankfulness

The thankfulness of the true Christian must continue—daily, hourly; its loss even for a moment should be deplored as an evidence of spiritual sickness.—Z. '96: 300.

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SELFISH PETITIONS UNJUSTIFIED

The object of prayer, is to benefit **ourselves**, and to bring us into that attitude of mind which will be in heart-readiness to receive our Father's blessing. God does not wish to give His choicest blessings where they would be fruitless. When He gives us these blessings, He purposes that our hearts shall be in that condition which will assimilate them and bring forth fruitage. We must ever be in an attitude of full submission to His will. We know that our Heavenly Father not only has the fullest knowledge of our needs, but is waiting to bestow His richest gifts upon His children, as soon as we are ready for them. Then let us never come before Him with vain, meaningless repetitions.—Z. '15: 244.

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Our conduct should be simple, unassuming, devoid of boastfulness, in everything manifesting humility of heart and simplicity.—Z. '05: 94.

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May we not in all our trials and perplexities take them to the Lord in prayer? Yes, yes; truly we can. And no comfort will be greater to the perplexed or sorrowing than the privilege of telling all to the Lord. His ear is ever open to the cry of his "little ones;" and the very telling of them to him and realization of his interest in all our affairs will refresh and cheer us. It will bring to remembrance his promises never to leave nor forsake us, and his wisdom and love and ability to cause all things, favorable and unfavorable, to work together for our good. Casting all our care upon him, and realizing that according to his promise, present trouble and all other things may be overruled for the good of all concerned, and to his praise, we may arise from our knees stronger, happier and more confident, as well as in closer fellowship and communion with the Lord, than if we had attempted to order our own affairs, and to get the great Jehovah to become our servant to execute our plans, which doubtless often are foolish in his sight, and would, if permitted, work injuriously to us or to others.—Z. '96 :150.

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J H Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 115

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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The Victories of Faith

Acts 7:9-16; Heb. 11:20-22.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 John 5:4.

WE are living in a day when faith is greatly discounted—in a day when people seem disposed to say, "I care not what a man believes, if only his life be honorable." And by this generally is meant that faith is of no consequence. Those who so hold usually put honor of men as the highest goal. Their sentiments, translated into plain English, would be, "With all your getting, get money and prosperity; for without these, no matter what you believe, or whom you worship, you will never prosper in the present life, success in which is the only goal now recognized by an increasing number."

The Bible standpoint, however, is the very reverse of this. God's Word puts faith first, and builds character upon that faith. God declares that no human being can do perfect works. Hence He has not made works the standard. Faith is God's standard, and He assures us that whoever has the proper faith must of necessity have works which will correspond to his faith. In line with this principle, we note that God's favorites of the Bible have all been men of faith. Their faith did not make them perfect, nor were their works always acceptable in God's sight, but He punished them for evil works and rewarded them for their great faith.

Thus we find in the Bible record that some of God's favorites committed grievous sins and made serious mistakes, and still, for all that, maintained themselves in God's favor, by reason of their faith.

God Loves Not the Wicked

Of all religious books ever written or ever read, the Bible is perhaps the most candid. It tells of the mistakes and the sins of the very characters which it holds up as models and examples of men after God's own heart. Yet the Bible leaves no room for any one to assume that God loves wickedness, or that the friends of God are the depraved of mankind. Quite to the contrary, the highest possible standards of righteousness, in word, in deed and and in thought, are inculcated, and we are distinctly told that full acceptance with God can be only along the lines of truth and righteousness.

God tells us that we and all mankind are by nature sinners. He tells us that we could do nothing to clear away our own guilt and the sentence that stands against us as members of the fallen race. But He also tells us that He purposes to adjust that matter for us satisfactorily; and hence that our responsibility is not for what we cannot avoid, but for what we can avoid—not for what we cannot do, but for what we can do. He tells us that the foundation of all our noblest endeavors will lie along the lines of confidence in Him. This confidence He calls faith. He assures us that without faith it is impossible to please Him, and He has shown us this in all the lessons of the Bible.

Faith Is Not Credulity

Many make the mistake of supposing that faith is credulity. Under this delusion they are ready to swallow any and everything of a religious kind, if they are told that God says so. But this is not the faith which the Bible encourages. On the contrary, the Bible would have us know definitely the things that God has promised, and exercise a definite faith in those things and give no heed whatever to the seductive vagaries of Satan, of our fellow men, or of our own imagination. . . .

The Faith Before Christ Came

Let us look into the past, and note the method by which God has all along sought His peculiar people. The first proclamation of God's purposes respecting our race was made to Abraham. God spake to Abraham, saying, "Walk as in My presence, and be thou perfect"—i.e., Do your best to be perfect. After Abraham had manifested some faith, God gave him further tests. When in obedience to those tests Abraham left his native land to live in Canaan, he manifested so great a faith that God called him His friend, and made to him the very first revelation of the Divine purposes in respect to humanity.

Abraham knew that there was a curse upon the race, under which the whole creation was groaning, going down to the tomb, and God's declaration to him was that the time would come when, instead of the curse, He would send a blessing. This meant to Abraham that, instead of men becoming more imperfect and wasting away in death, a change would come, by which they would be rescued from the dying condition, and resurrected from the power of the tomb.

This was a wonderful proposition, even for God to make; yet Abraham, with childlike faith, believed the Message. God declared to him that, because of his own faith, He would greatly bless him and his posterity, so that through him as a father eventually would come children who would accomplish the great work of blessing mankind, and would rescue all from the power of sin, Satan and death. The briefly epitomized statement of all this was in the words, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Genesis 28:14.

What was it to have faith in that Promise? What did it mean to Abraham? Assuredly it meant that thenceforth Abraham's mind would take in a larger horizon—the world of humanity, instead of merely his own immediate family and flocks and herds, and his nearest neighbors. It meant that if God would so honor his posterity, Abraham would seek in everything to co-operate with God and that great Promise.

For years God tested Abraham's faith. Yet he still believed. "His faith staggered not." After Isaac had been born and as yet had no child, God directed that this son of promise, the one in whom the whole Promise centered, should be sacrificed. What a test of faith! What a grand development of faith Abraham had acquired when he was ready to obey the Voice Divine, accounting that God was able to raise Isaac up again from the dead! Oh, for such a trust in God! Oh, for such a faith! Oh, for such an appreciation of Divine Power! . . . What would God not do for children who would trust Him thus!

It was the same with Isaac and with Jacob. They trusted that same Promise. It influenced the whole course of their lives. It made them more like God. It shaped every interest of life. Although they understood practically nothing of how God would accomplish so great a blessing, their faith laid hold upon the fact. From their posterity God would raise up a holy people to be His agency, His channel, for instructing the world, ruling the world, uplifting the world, resurrecting the dead, bringing mankind back to all that was lost through Adam's disobedience.

Their faith might have had plenty of opportunities for stumbling, if it had been weaker. If they had been more worldly-wise, they might have said, How can God do this thing and yet be just? Having once pronounced a sentence, how can He clear the guilty? But their faith wavered not. In their hearts they said, "God has promised; and what God has promised, He will do, and He will have His own way of accomplishing it."

By and by, the nation of Israel as a whole was called the people of God. The nation as a whole entered into a Covenant with God, and He with them, through Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant. Israel was impulsed by faith—faith in the Promise made to Abraham that God would use his posterity and through it bless all people, all of Adam's race—the living and the dead.

The Covenant of Sinai pledged the people of Israel that they would be a holy nation, that they would keep God's Law blamelessly. God covenanted that in that event He would fulfil in them the Promise made to Abraham. God knew that imperfect human beings could not keep His perfect Law. But He would let them try; He would let them learn the lesson; He would through that lesson give instruction to the angels respecting His own righteousness. He would also through it give instruction to Spiritual Israel, whom later He would develop and through whom the blessings actually would come. This St. Paul explains, saying, "The Law Covenant was added because of transgressions, until the promised Seed should come."—Galatians 3:19.

In other words, God started this work with Israel, in a typical manner, long centuries before the real Spiritual Israel would be developed. But He did not thereby do injury to the people who had covenanted to keep the Law, but who were unable to do so. On the contrary, they as a people were blessed by their endeavors to keep that Law, and blessed also by the chastisements which came upon them because of their failures and lack of faith.

But God especially blessed all of that people who shared Abraham's faith, so that the Apostle Paul could enumerate, in addition to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a considerable number who pleased God because of their faith, long centuries before Christ, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham came. Those Ancient Worthies, although they will not be the Seed of Abraham in the highest sense, on the spirit plane, will be the seed of blessing on the earthly plane—the channel through which the heavenly blessings will ultimately be extended to all nations.

What was it that impulsed the Jewish people during all those centuries past? Was it not faith in God—faith that He would fulfil the Promise made to Abraham? It surely was! And it is that Promise that still actuates such of the Jews as have not lost their faith—such of them as are still Jews. Those who have lost the faith of Abraham are no longer in any sense of the word related to the Promise; for the Promise was according to faith.

St. Paul speaks sympathetically of the Jewish nation, in respect to that original Promise which God made to them, saying: "Unto which Promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." (Acts 26:7.) And all the Jews, in proportion as they still maintain that hope, may still expect to come to a realization of all and more than they ever dreamed of.

Faith Since Christ Came

The coming of Christ did not change the Divine Purpose, and therefore did not change the faith of God's people. Jesus and the Apostles believed and taught the very Gospel which, St. Paul says, God preached in the beginning to Abraham. (Galatians 3:8.) The Apostolic Message also was that all the families of the earth were to be blessed through the Seed of Abraham. But there was an additional feature then to be proclaimed and to be believed; viz., that God had begun the work of providing this Seed of Abraham. The Messiah—that God had sent the Logos, His Son, into the world, that He might become the Seed of Abraham on the spirit plane, and eventually fulfil every feature of the original Promise.

All the Jews were in expectation of the Messiah, but they were not all Israelites indeed; they did not all have the proper faith. God preferred, therefore, to allow some of them to remain in a measure of blindness on the subject, while others were granted a special anointing of the eyes of their understanding, their eyes of faith. To this class Jesus said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God"—the Messianic Kingdom, through which the Seed of Abraham is to bless all the families of the earth.

Then came another step of faith. The early disciples said: We desire to believe that Jesus, the Son of God, is the foretold Seed of Abraham, but we do not see Him doing the work of blessing the world. Instead of reigning in triumph to dispense to the world the blessings secured by His sacrifice, He has gone to Heaven. How shall we understand this?

The Mystery—Christ in You

The answer of God through the Apostles was that "the faith once delivered to the saints" was still the same, but that now, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were to understand that The Messiah would not be one person, but many persons—not Jesus alone would be the Seed of Abraham, but Jesus as the Head and the Church as His members, or Body, would be that Seed. St. Paul says, "Ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of Promise." Jesus was represented by the head of Isaac, the Church was represented by the body of Isaac, in that figure. It has taken the entire Gospel Age to develop the Body of Christ, the Church.

Under another figure, Jesus was represented in Isaac, and the Church was represented in Rebecca, his bride. According to this figure, the antitypical Isaac has entered into glory, but waits for the development of the antitypical Rebecca. At the appointed and appropriate time He will come, the Seed of Abraham, and receive His Bride to Himself, and they twain will be one. And through the One, through the Kingdom of Glory, will come to all the families of the earth the blessing promised nearly four thousand years ago to Abraham.

This is "the faith once delivered to the saints," the hope set before us in the Gospel—the faith that God will use the Seed of Abraham to bless all humanity, and the hope that we by faithful perseverance and trust may become joint-heirs with Jesus, the Redeemer, in all that glorious inheritance of the Messianic Kingdom.

Let us not doubt the Wisdom of God in the arrangement which He has made, and which He has caused to be set forth in the Scriptures; viz., that this faith, based upon the Abrahamic Promise, is the Power of God by which it is His will that all His people shall be sanctified—separated so far as possible from the world and from sin; sanctified to Himself in Christ Jesus, their Lord. This is "the faith once delivered to the saints." This is the faith which enables us to gain the victory over the spirit of the world, and to be separate, sanctified to God, for service here and hereafter.—Z. '13: 156-158.

Led By a Way That They Knew Not

Exodus 16:1-15.

Golden Text:—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven."—John 6: 51.

FULL of exultation at their great deliverance by the mighty hand of God, the Israelites, still guided by the cloudy pillar, journeyed for the promised land by a circuitous route. They started upon the journey, which lasted forty years, while it might have been accomplished in as many days. The object of the long delay was their instruction in righteousness, especially in faith. This would have been profitable for any people, but especially for a subject people born in a state of serfdom, and hence unused to liberty and initiative. But, more than this, natural Israel was intended of the Lord to constitute a type or shadow of spiritual Israel, and the lessons of the former were to be illustrative of the lessons of the latter. Whoever has read the story of Israel, and failed to discern that they and their experiences were foreshadowings of better things coming, has failed to get the gist of the lesson the Lord would teach. The experiences and instructions of the wilderness journey remind us of the poet's words, "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

The first lesson of the journey showed that the people had much to learn along the lines of faith and trust in the Lord. One would have thought that the plagues upon Egypt resulting in their liberty would have been convincing proof to them of divine favor, and would have secured them from every doubt and fear that he who had begun a good work on their behalf would surely not desert them on the threshold. Nevertheless, after journeying for three days slowly they came to the waters of Marah, and sore was their disappointment when they found that they had been appropriately named — Marah, signifying bitter. The waters were brackish and unpalatable and unfit for use. A great murmuring ascended from all sides, the disappointment was intense. Where was Moses? Why was the water brackish? The cry of the people to Moses was in unbelief, reproach; but Moses cried unto the Lord in faith, and the Lord showed him a tree which, cast into the waters, acted as a medicine, sweetening them, making them fit for use. The lesson to the people must have been a valuable one, leading them to trust the Lord more fully and to realize his continued care for their interests.

Water, one of the most important elements for human sustenance, is used in the Scriptures to represent the Truth—the message of God—the hope of everlasting life. In a certain sense the Law Covenant made with Israel was such a hope, such a fountain of water, of which the Israelites might drink and be refreshed and be enabled to gain eternal life. But while the Law was good in many respects, it had in it certain condemnatory qualities which hindered it from giving to the Israelites the refreshment and the life everlasting which they had hoped for. The Law made nothing perfect, writes the Apostle—yea, he adds, that which was thought to be unto life was found to be unto death. —Rom. 7:10.

Healing the Brackish Waters

Moses, the Mediator of the Law Covenant, typified the Christ (Head and Body), the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the tree that Moses cast into the waters for their sweetening represented another tree—the one referred to in the statement, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3:13.) The tree represented the cross of Christ, the agency through which the waters of truth and divine law become waters of grace and blessing for the world of mankind in general when, in the Millennial Age, they shall be delivered from the bondage of Satan and sin, represented by the slavery of Egypt. As the Apostle points out, it will not be possible for God to make a new law under which to bless mankind, for the Law given to Israel was good, was perfect, as the law of God must always be. The divine promises represented by the water were poisoned by sin—by Adam's disobedience—and hence were unsuitable and could not give the desired blessing. The cross of Christ, by cancelling Adamic sin, cancelled also the condemnation of the divine law against mankind, and eventually will permit the great antitypical Mediator to make the gracious promises of God good, refreshing, applicable to all who seek to walk in the ways of the Lord. The New Covenant between God and Israel, in which all the families of the earth are to share the benefit, will shortly be sealed with the precious blood—be confirmed, made operative. It merely waits for the completion of the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, and meantime the Church of the First-born are counted in as members of the Body of the Mediator, and permitted to suffer with him—to share with him in the sufferings of the present time, that they may also have a share in the glory that shall follow, when the New Covenant shall be sealed, and through it the blessing of the Lord extend to every creature.

"Traveling o'er the desert's scorching sand,
Father, lead me! grasp my hand.
Lead me on! Lead me on!
When at Marah, parched with heat,
And the sparkling fountain greet,
Make the bitter water sweet.
Lead me on! Lead me on!" . . .

Our lesson opens with the declaration that the Israelites removed from Elim, going toward Mount Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month—just thirty days from the time they left Egypt, following the Passover. Apparently, therefore, they stayed at Elim about two weeks before entering the wilderness region surrounding Mount Sinai, one of whose peaks was called Mount Horeb, where God manifested himself to Moses in the burning bush. Not only had Moses made this journey several times, but Aaron also, for we remember that after the Lord's first revelation at the burning bush he sent Aaron to Moses and they met in Horeb, the Mount of God. That meeting of Moses and Aaron prior to the passing over of the first-born, etc., might not improperly be understood to symbolize the beginning of this Gospel Age, and to be a picture of the two features of the work of Christ: Aaron representing the sacrificial work as the priest, and Moses representing the future work as the leader and commander of the people. The Church of the First-born was typically represented in the under-priests, the sons of Aaron, and also typically represented in the body of Moses, illustrating our participation in the sufferings of Christ in this present time and also our inheritance in him in the glory that shall follow.

The journeying of the people toward Mount Sinai, then, would represent the carrying out of the great program outlined at the beginning, when Moses and Aaron met by divine arrangement; the gathering of all the hosts of Israel to Mount Sinai typified not the blessings which came to the Church at Pentecost, but the blessings which are about to come to the world, all mankind who are ready and willing to receive them under the New Covenant. The covenant made with natural Israel at Sinai by Moses, the mediator of that Law Covenant, typified specifically the new and better Covenant about to be made with Israel, and incidentally with the whole world of mankind through the better Mediator, the Christ, Head and Body. The Apostle clearly sets this forth in his delineations in Hebrews 12, where he pictures the time of trouble in the end of this age in connection with the sealing of the New Covenant with its type at Mount Sinai when and where the Law Covenant was sealed and made effective. His intimation is that in the trouble near at hand everything that can be shaken, political, social, religious, financial, will be shaken thoroughly, until only the unshakable, true things, shall remain. And these unshakable things he tells us will be related to the Kingdom of Messiah in which we shall share. "We receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken."

7

"The Bread That Came Down From Heaven"

Travelers tell us that the wilderness surrounding Sinai is far from barren. One declares: "The whole sides of the valley through which the children of Israel marched are still tufted with brushwood, which doubtless afforded food for their beasts. Lastly, the herbage under these trees and shrubs is completely covered with snails of a prodigious size and of the best sort. However uninviting such a repast might appear to us, they are here esteemed a great delicacy. These mollusks of the land would aid in sustaining the people."

We can see, however, that so mighty a host would have a very limited bill of fare, and realizations of the conditions will help us to sympathize with them in their murmurings when they said, "Would to God we had died by the hands of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger." It appeared to them that their first hopes had died, that no preference of the Lord had been shown them, and that they should have continued under the Egyptian bondage. We see their lack of faith and that the lessons of the plagues and the sea and the healing of the waters of Marah had not given them full assurance of faith that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was leading them forth to fulfil in them his glorious promises made to the fathers—the blessing of the world.

But while blaming them for lack of faith we are not to blame them for desiring some of the necessities of life, nor does the Lord blame them for the latter; rather he was waiting for them to appreciate their need, so that they might the better appreciate the bountiful provision which he had intended. In answer to their cry God sent them bread from heaven—not indeed baked, cut in slices and buttered, but according to the Lord's usual way he did for them what they could not do for themselves; he provided the substance from which they might make their bread. The distribution of the manna and its daily sending through a long period marks it as a miracle.

There are indeed other mannas from that desert of Arabia. One kind is exuded in drops from the tamarisk tree, and is a sweet, semi-fluid substance. The manna of commerce is an exudation from the flowering ash. But none of the known mannas of Arabia correspond to this described in Exodus: (1) The supply is very small and only at special seasons of the year; (2) they are unsuitable for food; (3) they can be kept indefinitely. The manna of the Israelites spoiled after twenty-four hours except that gathered on the sixth day, which corrupted not for forty-eight hours, leaving a rest from the gathering on the seventh day, the Sabbath. It was ground in mills, and baked as bread or stewed. By this miracle of the manna the Lord taught the Israelites faith in him as their great Provider.

To Spiritual Israelites there is a lesson in connection with the manna also: it is Scripturally called the "bread of angels," and again, the "bread of the mighty," and again, the "bread of heaven." (Psa. 78:25.) It was a food supplied by the Lord's providence. Our Lord Jesus tells us that he was the antitype of this bread—that it typified the life-giving qualities which he possessed and which he sacrificed on our behalf; that all the dying race might profit through his death and obtain a right to life eternal. Thank God that some of us have had the eyes of our understanding opened to hear the message of good tidings respecting its value. More than this, some of us have already tasted that the Lord is gracious, and we have already fed on this bread from heaven, rejoicing the while that it is not only for the First-born but for all Israel—for all who eventually shall desire to come into accord with our God. It was some of this manna that by divine direction was put into the golden pot which was hidden in the ark with the scroll of the Law under the golden mercy seat, typifying, illustrating, the immortality which the Lord has provided for the Church of the First-born, to whom he has sent the message, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2:17.) That incorruptible hidden manna in the golden pot represents the grace of God in the Church of the First-born, and teaches what is elsewhere plainly stated in the Scriptures, that the "little flock" shall enjoy the incorruptible life, immortality. While these will have inherent life, the remainder of God's creatures in their eternal perfection will instead of this have supplied to them eternal life.

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The lesson of faith was to be so impressed before the sending of the manna that its coming was foretold, and the Israelites were gathered to behold the glory of the Lord. They looked at the cloud which represented the Lord and which was caused to shine with resplendent glory. And as Aaron spoke [illegible] and their murmurings [illegible] their not against [illegible] afterward [illegible] ness of the Lord [illegible] the sage, saying, "I have [illegible] saying, At even [illegible] children of Israel [illegible] ye shall be [illegible] shall ye eat flesh [illegible] filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." How [illegible] was the Lord in his dealings with his people, full of compassion and of tender mercy. The people should have cried unto the Lord, "Give us this day our daily bread," but should not have murmured and stipulated that they wanted something as good as the flesh-pots of Egypt.

Many Spiritual Israelites may learn a lesson along this line. It is not for us to dictate to the Lord how he shall provide for us, but by faith to accept his provision according to his promises, and while waiting for the same to make our requests, make them unto the Lord—but always according to his will. "Thy will be done" should be the spirit of our hearts, and hence the spirit of our prayers. Our Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him, and he is more willing to give good gifts unto his children than are earthly parents to give good gifts to theirs.

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The next morning after the shower of quail the Israelites had a new experience with the "corn from heaven." It came with the dew, and when the latter left the little grains of food were scattered all over the country side. Thenceforth it became a part of the regular labor of each family to gather its portion of the heavenly manna. The word manna is supposed to signify, What is it? Moses answered, "It is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." What a constant reminder they would have, in the necessity for gathering this grain, [illegible] the Lord's [illegible] How full of [illegible] have sober [illegible] as the days went [illegible] continually astonished to find [illegible] lack of faith and a disposition to complaining [illegible] all this seems strange to us we should allow it to make a deep impression upon our minds and apply it to ourselves. For have not we the true Bread that came down from heaven? and has not God so arranged our affairs and interests that it is quite necessary for us to go continually to the throne of the heavenly grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need? Nevertheless, is it not true that many find their hearts overcharged with the cares of this life, and that their faith in the Lord continually needs to be refreshed? How few there are who go regularly to the throne of grace to obtain their supply of daily refreshment! How few realize that they need daily bread as much as does the natural man.

The supply of manna was a beautiful figure of the supply of grace in Christ: it needed to be gathered daily; it would not keep over for succeeding days. The lesson of this would seem to be that those who accumulate much of God's grace and truth must also be dispensers of it. It is not provided with a view to the creation of a spiritual aristocracy. How often we have seen this exemplified: those who study the Word merely for themselves, and who do not commingle with the brethren and share their blessings, are not in the long run as much advantaged as we would have expected. Our gathering of the manna is to be day by day; our feeding on the heavenly bread is to be a continuous privilege, without which we will not have the strength for the journey of life; but with it we would be strong in the Lord, and may perchance be permitted to assist others by the dispensing of divine grace to them.

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He declares (Genesis 2:4) that he has already described the generation or developments of things heavenly and earthly from the beginning, before there was any plant life. Incidentally he mentions that at that time there was no rain—before the flood. He again assures us that man was God's last creation, to be the king or supervisor of earth. Then, much to our satisfaction, Moses proceeds to give an account of the specialty of man's creation, so different from that of the lower animals and vegetation. He was not **evolved**, but was God's handiwork. He was not **spirit**, but flesh, formed of the dust of the ground. But still he had the spirit of life common to all the lower creatures, of whom he was the head or king. The Hebrew reads, literally, "In his nostrils the breath of lives"—the breath or spirit of life common to all breathing creatures.

Then a description of Eden follows, how God particularly supervised its preparation as the home of the king of earth, in which God placed him. Nothing in this implies that Eden was made after Adam's creation. On the contrary, we have already been informed that God's creative work ceased with the production of Mother Eve, and that since then He has rested or desisted from further mundane creation—leaving to His glorious Son, Messiah, the work of human redemption and restitution.—Acts 3:19-21.

When we read (V. 19) that all animals that God had previously created were named by Adam, it would be foolish for us to suppose that the animals were a subsequent creation. This bringing of all creatures to Adam's attention implies his mastery of them all and leads up to the statement that in none of them was he able to find fellowship and companionship. God wished him to realize the need of a companion and wife before providing her.

Man Originally Sexless

The details of human creation imply that Adam lived in Eden some time alone and sexless. Some Bible students infer from the chronology that it was about two years from the time of Adam's creation until the expulsion from Eden under the death sentence. The cause for the division of Adam into two persons is stated; the earth was to be filled, populated with a race of his species, and amongst all the creatures none was suitable as a companion for him or fit to be his mate, and the mother of an offspring in his likeness.

Thus again is shown that Adam was distinctly different from apes and monkeys, and all the other creatures placed under his control. He was in the likeness of his Creator. Other Scriptures show us that after the earth shall have been filled with a population, it is the Divine purpose that the sex quality in humanity shall be dropped. Jesus' words are, "They that shall attain unto that Age (of perfection—future) will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be like the angels of Heaven"—sexless. See Luke 20:34-36.

The division of Adam into two parts, male and female, left the headship with the male, but deprived him of some of his sympathetic qualities. His wife, predominating in the sympathetic tendencies, had in her perfection less of the masculine and aggressive traits; but the two were perfectly adapted to each other's needs and fulfilled each other's ideals. The fall from God's favor has affected both sexes and has disturbed the original balance and harmony, producing extremes of coarseness and effeminacy, destroying perfection and robbing the marriage relationship of much of its ideal happiness.

The Restitution or resurrection of the willing and obedient, to be brought about by Messiah's Kingdom, will not mean the restoration of sex perfections, but rather the gradual perfecting of each individual in the image and likeness of God in personal completeness, such as Adam possessed before his division.

The sex attractions having passed away, man will not be alone, as Adam was originally; for the earth will be full of human brethren, all in the image of God and in fullest fellowship of spirit, enjoying the world-wide Eden. Such a condition of things can be appreciated only as we take the Divine standpoint and realize the superior perfection of God and the angels in their sexless condition—though always spoken of as masculine.

"By One Man's Disobedience"

Note the consistency of the Bible theory which necessitated the division of one man into male and female. God purposed that the entire race must proceed from the one man. He foresaw sin and how He would permit it to flourish, and how He would provide for man's recovery. If two or more separate individuals had sinned and involved the race, it would have required just as many redeemers, according to the Divine Law, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," a man's life for a man's life. (Deut. 19:21.) Because God from the beginning intended only one Lamb of God, one glorious Redeemer, therefore the entire race sprang from the one man Adam, that "as by a man came death, by a man" should come "the resurrection of the dead."—1 Cor. 15:21.

Second Adam and Second Eve

We should not forget that Adam and Eve in some respects foreshadowed Christ and the Church. Jesus personally is the great Savior of mankind, whose death constitutes the Ransom-price for the sins of Adam and the entire race. He is to be the Great Life-Giver, or Father of mankind. During His Millennial Reign He will give back earthly life to Adam and as many of his race as will receive it —raising them gradually, more and more, out of sin and death conditions, up to perfection during that thousand years.—"the times of refreshing that shall come from the presence of the Lord, . . . the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19 to 21.) This will be the glorious work of regenerating the world.—"whosoever will" may then drink the water of life freely.

But before beginning His work of regenerating the world, God has arranged that first from the wound in Christ's side, figuratively, an Elect Church shall be formed to be His companion and joint-heir in His Kingdom—the second Eve, on the spirit plane, as He, the Heavenly One, is the Second Adam.

The Church will not be the Life-Giver or Father, but she will be the mother, or care-taker of the regenerated hosts of humanity during the Millennium. Under her care the willing and obedient will retain the image of God in the flesh. — Z. '12: 373, 374.

Thy Shield and Thy Reward

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward."—Gen. 15:1.

THESE words were addressed to the "father of the faithful," and as a heritage they descend to his children—to all those who are of the faith of Abraham (Gal. 3:7; Rom. 4:16), whether of the fleshly or the spiritual seed. Abram had entered into covenant relationship with God. God had called him to separate himself from his native country and kindred and friends to follow the course of his providential leadings toward an unknown land. And Abram, in full reliance on the promise of God, had obediently severed the familiar social and business ties, and, with his wife and family and father and nephew who shared his faith and obedience to God, started on his pilgrimage to the unknown land. And having entered the land and received the promise—"All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever," etc.—though he was not then permitted to own a foot of it, he wandered up and down in it as a pilgrim and stranger, encountering difficulties, too, in coming in contact with the godless inhabitants of the land and with the Egyptians, yet always believing that what God had promised he was able and willing also to perform in his own good time and way.

But that which taxed Abram's faith most was that, as the years rolled by, not only was the promise of the land delayed, but also the promised heirs who should inherit it; for not even one heir had yet come.

It was in one of these seasons of discouragement—though not of despair, for Abram never relaxed his faith, but trusted and hoped still when in darkness and perplexity—that God in a vision graciously encouraged his fainting heart with the above words of cheer and hope—"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward." Then Abram was permitted to inquire into the mysterious ways of God and received the renewed assurance that the promise had not been forgotten, and that his hope would certainly be realized.

We find a very similar fatherly providence in the case of Jacob, who also, in the faith of Abraham, had forsaken all to follow the Lord's leading. In a time of great perplexity and trial of faith the Lord appeared to him in a vision prophetic of the future glory of his Kingdom and of the communication of its heavenly and earthly phases, and again confirmed his covenant unto him (Gen. 28: 10-15); and Jacob arose from his sleep on the stony pillow, bearing in mind the bright vision of the Kingdom glory—of the messengers of God ascending and descending upon the ladder suspended 'twixt earth and heaven — refreshed and comforted, saying, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. . . . This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."—Gen. 28:16-19.

Thus God has always been watchful over his people, never suffering them to be tempted or tried beyond their power of endurance, yet permitting them often to be very severely tested. The consolation here offered to Abraham is that offered to all who are of the faith of Abraham, and its parallel in the New Testament is that precious statement of our Lord (John 14:21-23), "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. . . . and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." So in the midst of all the temptations and trials that beset us in our earthly pilgrimage, while we walk by faith toward the blessed inheritance reserved for the overcoming saints, we also may recognize the voice of our God, saying, "Fear not: I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward."

"Fear not," beloved; "there is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment" (1 John 4:18); "If God be for us, who can be against us?" or "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Say in your heart as did Paul, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." —Rom. 8:31-39.

Do hosts of foes oppose themselves — place obstacles in your way, hinder your influence and seek to dishearten you by heaping upon you reproaches, and do circumstances seem to conspire against you to fill your heart with alarm and dread? say to your soul, "Fear not," "hope thou in God," and mark his loving providences as—

"Through waves and clouds and storms,
He gently clears thy way,"—

until a blessed acquaintance with God through such experiences develops in the heart that perfect love that casteth out fear. Then shall you enter more and more fully into the blessed rest of faith, and like the eagle that soars above the storm cloud, live at such an altitude of Christian experience as to enable you to rejoice in the Lord always and in everything to give thanks.

"Fear not, I am thy shield," saith Jehovah. Then "Why are thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God." He would not have one of his children live in an atmosphere of tormenting fear, but would have them happy and always rejoicing in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, free from all fear and corroding care by simply trusting in him, ever remembering the blessed promise — "The Lord Jehovah is a sun and shield [to shine upon our pathway and into our hearts and to protect us from all the fiery darts of the wicked]: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Psa. 42:5; 84:11.

"I am [also] thy exceeding great reward." Notice, the promise is not put in the future tense, having reference to the promised glory of his people in the ages to come; but it is present, "I am," etc. Yes, the abiding presence of God, manifested to the hearts of his people now, even to-day, in the midst of its cares, its vexations, its labors, its trials of faith, patience and endurance, this is the blessed present privilege of all his saints. And not only the presence of God, but also of his dear Son, our Lord and Savior, is also vouchsafed to us so long as we faithfully maintain our covenant relations with him.

Should the child of God, the heir of glory, the inheritor of all the exceeding great and precious promises, and the present companion of Divinity itself which condescends to our low estate, ever feel desolate or forsaken or alone? or fear that his love will ever forsake or leave him to be tossed helplessly upon the billows of misfortune at the mercy of the prince of this world who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience? Ah, no! Greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us. We are not alone in the world; for we have the blessed promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) Nor is the smallest interest of ours overlooked.—Matt. 10:29-31.

How truly **"exceeding great"** is this present "reward" of the faithful saints who are daily and hourly walking with God—going about the Father's business, meekly bearing the reproaches of Christ, enduring hardness as good soldiers in his service and taking up their cross daily and following in the Master's footprints. Truly we can say to the world, as did our Lord, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." The world cannot comprehend our joy, nor know the sweets of this fellowship with God and with his dear Son; for "The secret of the Lord is [only] with them that fear him."—Psa. 25:14.

This joy in the Lord is, however, also compatible with much suffering; for the saints are all to be made perfect through suffering, which was true also of those who shall constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom. And, like their Lord, Christ Jesus, they will all be considered of the world as "smitten of God and afflicted." This is because the world cannot comprehend either the plan or methods of God for the refining and perfecting of the gold that shall by and by shine in the glorious Temple of God. Consequently, like faithful Abraham, we must be content to walk with God by faith and not by sight, like him hoping to the end for the promise, not expecting here to realize aught but the earnest of our inheritance, which we have in the present reward of the divine presence and approval.—Z. '95:287, 288.

Holy, Harmless, Perfect

Luke 2:40-52.

Golden Text:—"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

ONE peculiarity of the Bible, which differentiates it from all other religious books, is its candor, its faithfulness to facts. Without specially preaching against them it mentions the weaknesses, the blemishes, the failures of the various heroes which it draws to our attention. Mother Eve's deception, father Adam's disobedience without deception, Abraham's error in not properly acknowledging his wife, Moses' mistake in respect to the smiting of the rock the second time, the shortcomings of Eli, Samson, Saul, David, Solomon and others of Old Testament times. The New Testament similarly mentions the strife amongst the apostles as to who should be the greatest, the wrong spirit of James and John in connection with the Samaritans, Peter's denial of the Lord, the dispute between Barnabas and Paul respecting John and Mark, etc. This faithfulness of the Word of God in pointing out that there is none righteous, no not one, amongst all the race of Adam — that all need forgiveness, reconciliation to the Father through the atoning sacrifice—proves the reliability of its testimony.

Noting that the Scriptures were written by various pens during a period of sixteen centuries, and that they all manifest the same uniformity, honesty, impresses upon us all the more the full import of their declarations respecting Jesus—that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." This was in accord with the predictions of the prophets respecting Messiah, also with the narrative of his birth, boyhood, youth, manhood, to his resurrection and ascension to glory. Angels and men declare to us that he was separate from sinners, that his life came not from the impaired and condemned Adamic stock, but was a transference from a spirit existence previously enjoyed. His perfection, his keeping of the divine law, his acceptance with the Father, were fully demonstrated and assured to us in that "God raised him from the dead on the third day."—1 Cor. 15:4.

The Boyhood of Jesus

Our lesson (v. 40) declares that prior to his reaching his twelfth year he had been growing in stature and in strength and was gradually being filled with wisdom. We are not to forget that he was separate from sinners, nor to expect that other boys at his age should manifest the same degree of wisdom. Quite to the contrary — inheriting blemishes, mental, physical, moral, they would not belong to the same class at all. Our Lord Jesus is not a pattern for the natural (unconsecrated) man, and in harmony with this thought he is not introduced to us as our exemplar until he reached the age of manhood, consecrated his life to the doing of the work which the Father had committed to him, and had begun his ministry under the anointing of the holy Spirit.

Nor is his earthly ministry nor his teachings the example or pattern for the world: these are merely for his footstep followers, his disciples—those who, justified through faith in his blood, have similarly made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, by full consecration of themselves to live not unto themselves but unto him who died for them. Doubtless there is heavenly wisdom in connection with the limited description given us of the childhood and youth of our Savior. These were not our examples, and indeed any attempt to measure the ordinary boy or youth by that glorious and perfect standard would have undoubtedly been discouraging—perhaps to an injurious degree. Let us not, then, attempt to imagine with particularity what the Lord has seen fit to cover and not reveal. Let us content ourselves with the simple narrative, with the meager testimony of the Gospel on this subject—that Jesus developed in wisdom as well as in physical strength.

The Grace of God Upon Him

The word "grace" signifies that which gives pleasure, as loveliness of form or character, or the most admirable virtues. Hence the grace of God signifies his favor, that Jesus as a child was such a one as the Father had pleasure in, and, reversely, such a one as reflected in his form and character the grace, perfection, the beauty which is of God. John, speaking of our Savior, says, "We beheld his glory,— the beauty of the only begotten of the Father." All this speaks perfection in its most absolute sense, and would be very discouraging not only to other children but to their parents also were it understood that the boy Jesus was given of God to be a pattern or model for others. On the other hand it is important for us to know this, as corroborating the testimony that he was undefiled, separate from sinners, holy and acceptable to the Father from infancy to manhood.

In divine providence our Lord was not only born under favorable religious influences, but trained in that way. His mother and her husband were pious, reverent, and evidently disposed to be obedient to every feature of the divine Law to the extent of their ability. In accord with the demands of the Law they went annually to Jerusalem to the feast of Passover, the great religious gathering which called the typical people from one end of their land to the other to a special worship of the Lord, to a special remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, to their adoption as his people and incidentally to the observance of a type of the coming blessings through the killing of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and whose flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed—symbolically.

Jesus a Son of the Law

It had been the custom of Joseph and Mary to go to these feasts every year, and doubtless Jesus, as he grew older, went with them. The one mentioned in our lesson was noteworthy above the others because of our Lord's conduct on this occasion—different from what it had previously been and what it subsequently was. Under the Jewish custom a boy at twelve years of age was supposed to make some kind of a consecration of himself, some kind of a special recognition of the Law, on account of which he was called a "son of the Law," a child of the Law.

The wisdom in which our Lord had been growing up to that time, like all other things pertaining to the Jewish system, was intimately interwoven with the Law and the prophets. He recognized himself as being not the son of Joseph but the son of God, and knew that he had come into the world on a special mission, and it was a preliminary step on his part to gain wisdom respecting the work he was to do as it had been outlined in the promises, in the Law, and through the testimonies of the prophets. Wise far beyond his years because of his perfection, his mind doubtless seized upon the custom of the twelfth year: doubtless he wondered if this custom of becoming a son of the Law did not in some sense of the word imply that he at that age should become in some measure identified with the Law as a student, or in some other capacity.

Of winsome manner, in favor with man as well as with God, and wise hearted, Joseph and Mary found little necessity for keeping close watch over his doings. He was apparently, for a child of his age, especially well able to take care of himself. Hence it was that on returning from the feast they went a full day's journey before noticing that he was not with any of their company, and had evidently been left behind at Jerusalem. It required a day to return to Jerusalem, and on the third day seeking him they found him in the Temple. They were amazed to see a child of twelve years seated amongst the doctors of the Law, listening to their discussions and asking questions. We are not told of the nature of the questions of those three days, but we may be sure that they all pertained to the Law and the covenants and the prophets respecting Messiah and his work.

Jesus, having already pondered these matters in his own mind, was now seeking all the wisdom he could secure from those who would naturally be best informed on these subjects. Doubtless a part of his inquiry was at what age Messiah could in any measure begin his work, and whether or not the custom of considering a boy the son of the Law at twelve years of age was founded upon anything in the Law or was merely a human tradition. Apparently he would have been glad to have found something in the Law to have justified his entrance upon some department of the Father's business, but found nothing, as this was merely a provision of the Talmud and not of divine authority.

In response to their gentle chiding that he had caused them worry, uneasiness, and that they had been seeking him, Jesus replied, "Why need you have sought me? Did you not know that I would be somewhere about my Father's house?" We prefer this free translation, in accord with the revised version, to the one given in our common version. We may be sure that those days spent in the Temple, studying the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, were a feast to that wonderful child's expansive and expanding mind. Apparently he had reached the solution of his queries, and determined that it was not in accordance with divine providence that he should in any sense of the word begin his ministry or public work at this time. In harmony with this conclusion we read that he returned with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them—did not attempt to begin his heavenly mission.

"Train Up a Child"

We cannot encourage imperfect parents to expect to rear imperfect children full of wisdom and the graces of perfection, but we can assure them that very much indeed depends upon the way in which they train their children as to what kind of men or women they shall become, and whether they shall bring to their parents happiness or unhappiness, sorrow or joy. It is a sad fact that many parents train up their children in the way they should not go—plant in them the wrong sentiments, which subsequently bring forth characteristics of which they are ashamed, for which they reproach and reprove the children, and against which the children when grown may be obliged to battle for the remainder of life. What a blessing it would be both to parents and to children did the former rightly understand how early the training and disciplining is necessary—that discipline, obedience, insisted upon with firmness and kindness should be inculcated from the day of birth persistently.

Where a child has been reasonably well born, has been reared under the influences of a Christian home, in which the Bible is the recognized standard, in which one or both the parents are consecrated to the Lord, in which prayer is a constant testimony to that parent's faith in the Lord and trust in his providential care, in which the parent not only seeks to exemplify the fruits of the Spirit — meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love — but seeks to inculcate these in the children, the child so trained under such experiences would, we believe, very generally be ready at the age of twelve years to make a consecration of himself to the Lord—to seek after and strive to follow the instructions of the divine message.

The promises to those who early give their hearts to the Lord are known to us all, and many have proven their wisdom—"They that seek me early shall find me:" "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 8:17; 22:6.) Train up a child to sow wild oats, to go thoughtlessly, irreverently, selfishly through the world, and when he is old it will be very difficult indeed to turn him out of the ruts of selfishness into the highway of decency, consideration and love for others.

We will admit that ours is a very difficult day in which to properly rear children. Nevertheless, instead of making the parent lax and indifferent in respect to his obligations, it should lead him to the greater diligence and to the more earnestly seeking of wisdom from on high, that he may so discharge his duty toward the child as to bless it for life with a proper foundation of character laid in the proper cement of appreciation of justice, righteousness, mercy and truth.—Z. '06:28, 29.

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J. A. Maloan

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No. 116

THE
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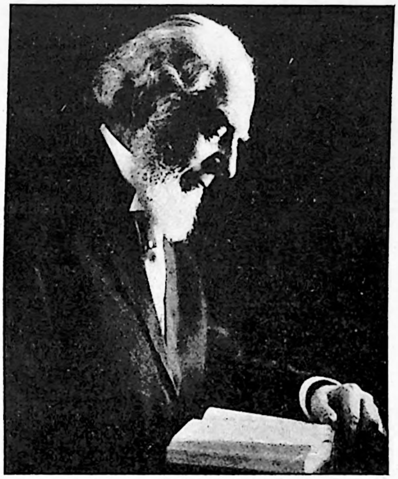
Rev. 1:10.



BROTHER RUSSELL

GLORIFIED SEVEN YEARS AGO—OCTOBER 31st, 1916

THE
VOICE OF
THE LORD
Psa. 68:33.

A SAFE RULE

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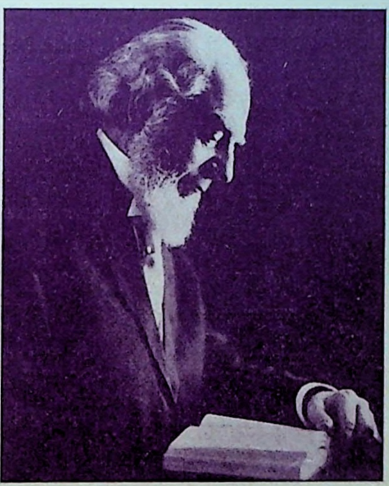

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The Voice of the Lord

1 Samuel 3:1-13, 19, 20

9

6-3-7

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—1 Samuel 3: 9.

TODAY'S Study gives a little insight into the family conditions of the Israelites at a time not long after the days of Samson and of Ruth. It shows us the deep religious sentiment prevailing amongst many of the people. The Tabernacle of the Lord, in this Study styled the Temple, was located at Shiloh, a few miles north of Jerusalem. The priest in charge was Eli. The people by Divine direction went annually to worship the Lord, to offer sacrifice, etc., at the Feast time, the Passover.

The father and the mother of Samuel were of these annual worshipers before Samuel was born. It was on the occasion of one of these visits that Hannah made earnest prayer to the Lord for a son, vowing that if her petition was granted, her son should be devoted to the Lord's service for life. Her prayer was answered. The child was born and named Samuel, which signifies in God's Name. When he was weaned he was presented to the Lord through Eli, the priest—to be the latter's servant, assistant, in the service of the Tabernacle and the service of the priest's home, which was connected with the Tabernacle. . . .

7

God's Reproof of Eli

Our lesson opens with the declaration that the child Samuel "ministered unto the Lord before Eli"; that is to say, he was a servant of the Lord by virtue of his being a servant to Eli, who was the Lord's representative and priest. The Word of Jehovah was precious in those days; that is, it was seldom that God sent messages at that time. Perhaps that of the angel of the Lord who appeared to the father and mother of Samson, probably fifty years before, was the last direct communication between the Lord and any of His people Israel. "There was no open vision"—visions and revelations were not then being given. The Divine Plan was hidden. The Urim and the Thummim answers of the Lord to the inquiries of the people had ceased.

It is supposed that Eli at this time was about seventy years of age—some think nearer eighty. His vision was dim. He was sleeping in one apartment and little Samuel, his servant, in another. The latter heard a voice calling him and three separate times went to Eli to ask what service he could render, only to be told that it was a mistake, and that he had not been called. But by the third time Eli the priest realized that it was God who had called Samuel; and he instructed the lad that if the voice should again be heard, he should answer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." And so it was. The voice came again, and apparently the angel of the Lord appeared to Samuel at the same time. Then the Lord gave a message to Samuel respecting Eli—fortelling the sad end of the lives of his two sons, and Eli's own death, and that Eli's family should nevermore serve the Lord as priests. The inference is given that Eli's sons misused their position as under priests, taking more of the sacrifices than they were properly allowed in the Divine arrangement, and besides this, practising immorality, and thus misleading the people into unrighteousness, whereas, as the Lord's servants and priests, they should have been instructors of the people in righteousness, both by precept and example.

Divine Disapproval of Weak Character

This was not the first time that the Lord had reproved Eli regarding the wrong course of his sons and what would happen. Years before a message had been sent him on this very subject, and although Eli himself apparently was faithful and loyal to God, he had not restrained his sons; hence he was a sharer in the penalty which came upon his sons.

In the morning Eli inquired of Samuel whether or not the Lord had spoken any further, and what He said. It was a trial to Samuel to tell his friend and benefactor, who was like a father to him, respecting the Lord's criticism and pronouncement of judgment against himself and his family; but Eli demanded to know the full particulars, and we read that "Samuel told him every whit." Thus it is often with the Lord's faithful servants; their tenderness of heart, their sympathy, might prompt them to hide, to cover, matters which their sense of duty may require them to speak boldly. In every case the individual's conscience must be educated, and of course the Word of God is the educator.

When Eli heard what the Lord had declared respecting his family, he answered most loyally, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." But however faithful and submissive he may thus appear to be, we know that his character was not satisfactory to God. There are many like Eli, willing to take, without murmuring, the punishments which God metes out; but the Lord prefers characters that are stronger. Eli would have been more pleasing to the Lord had he had more firmness of character—a clearer appreciation of his duty toward the Lord as His servant, and toward his children as their father. We may be sure that strong characters are more pleasing to everybody. They may in some respects be more difficult to deal with; but, nevertheless, firmness of character is something that is a jewel, highly esteemed by all wise men and women, as well as by the Lord.

Samuel grew in favor with God and with Eli and with all the people of Israel, as they came to know him; and they perceived that the Spirit of the Lord was with him, and that he would be a representative of God amongst them.

All in Samuel's time could not be priests, but only those of the priestly tribe. All then could not be prophets, but merely such as God was pleased to use as His mouthpieces. As St. Peter says. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." But, as St. Peter proceeds to tell us, the prophecies were not generally understood by those who uttered them, but were meant to be understood by the Church of this Age, in due time, as the Holy Spirit would make them known—"meat in due season." . . .

All of the Royal Priesthood class, even at the present time, are God's prophets, God's mouthpieces. These, and these only, are authorized to speak in the name of the Lord. Their ordination, or authorization, does not come by any laying on of hands of bishops or anybody else; but, as the Scriptures declare, it comes directly from God—through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Hearken to St. John speaking to the whole Church. He says, "Ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye all know it." Whoever has this anointing of the Spirit should be able to discern its influence in his heart and life, and should recognize that it is his authorization to serve as a priest and as a prophet of the Lord: as St. Peter says, "that we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us."—Z. '15: 24-26.

Your Precious Faith

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"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1: 7.

FAITH has in it the two elements of intellectual assurance and heart reliance. The former is faith in the abstract sense; the latter is its concrete form. It is in this latter, fullest sense we read that, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10.) Both the head and the heart—the intellect and the affections—are necessary to that faith without which it is "impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6); though many fancy they have faith when they have only one of its essential elements. With some it is all emotion; with others it is all intellectuality; but neither of these can stand the tests of fiery ordeal they must abide together if they are to endure to the end and be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

An intellectual grasp of the fundamental principles of divine truth—viz.: of the existence of a personal, intelligent God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and of his purpose and plan of redemption through his only begotten and well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ—constitutes the **foundation** of faith; while trust and reliance to the extent of his promises, upon the personal God who is the author of our being and who, as a Father, invites the implicit confidence and love of his children, make up the **superstructure** of our faith.

The trial of our faith to which the Lord and the apostles refer is therefore a trial, not only of our intellectual recognition of divine truth, but also of our heart reliance upon God. In both respects every true child of God will find his faith severely tried, and, as a soldier of Christ, let him not fail to be armed for the conflict. If an attack is made upon the intellectual foundation of our faith we should see to it that we have a, "Thus saith the Lord," for every item of our belief. Let the Word of God settle every question, and let no human philosophies, however ingenious, lead us into the labyrinths of error; for if the foundations of faith become unsettled, the superstructure cannot stand when the winds and the floods of adversity and temptation beat against it. Doubt and fear will cause it to tremble, and when it is thus weakened the vigilant adversary will surely send a blast of temptation against it, and great will be the soul's peril.

Let us, therefore, look well to the foundations of our faith—study the doctrine and get a clear intellectual conception of every element of divine truth which the inspired Word presents to the people of God; let us become rooted, grounded, settled, established in the faith, the doctrines of God, and hold them fast: they are the divine credentials; and let us give earnest heed to them, lest at any time we should let them slip.—Heb. 2:1.

But having the doctrines clearly comprehended as foundations of faith, we need also to look well to the superstructure of heart reliance, which is really in greater danger from storms and floods than are the foundations, being more constantly exposed. The Apostle Peter tells us that a tried, proved faith, a faith that has stood the tests of fiery ordeal and come off victorious, is very precious in the sight of God. That is, that every time we pass through a conflict and still retain, not only the truth, but also our confidence in God and reliance upon his promises in the dark as well as in the light, our integrity of heart and of purpose, and our zeal for truth and righteousness, our characters have grown stronger, more symmetrical and more Christ-like, and hence more pleasing to God, who is thus subjecting us to discipline for this very thing.

Therefore, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the **fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:12, 13.) It is worthy of notice here that special reference is made, not to the tests of intellectual belief brought about by the presentation of false doctrine, but to reproaches and persecution for Christ's sake, either for adherence to his doctrines or conformity to his righteousness; for, the Apostle adds, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." He warns us to take heed only that we suffer not as evil-doers. "Yet," he says, "if any man suffer as a Christian [that is, either for Christian principles or Christian doctrine], let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

The Prophet Daniel also says that particularly in this time of the end, "many shall be purified and made white and **tried**;" and Malachi (3:2, 3) compares the trials of this time to the "refiner's fire" and to "fuller's soap," which are designed to refine and purify the Lord's people. The Apostle Paul urges that we fight the good fight of faith, and patiently endure afflictions to the end. (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3.) And many are the words of consolation and blessed comfort offered by the Psalmist and others to the tempest-tossed and suffering people of God—See Psa. 77:1-14; 116: 1-14; 34:19; 31:24; 2 Thess. 3:3.

Are you then, dear brother or sister, hard pressed on every side with temptations to doubt that God's protection, love and care are **yours**, that his precious promises belong to **you**? have you grown discouraged and disheartened? do the foes seem too many and too strong for you? do the reproaches come with crushing weight, and do the clouds hang heavy over your seemingly defenseless head? Ah, it is just here that faith must claim her victory! Is it not promised, "This is the victory that overcometh, . . . even your faith?" It is your faith that is on trial now. In the calmer days when the sun of favor shone brightly upon you, you were quietly laying the foundation of a knowledge of the truth, and rearing the superstructure of Christian character. Now you are in the furnace to be proved: summon therefore all your courage: fortify your patience; nerve yourself to endurance; hold fast to your hope; call to mind the promises, they are still yours; and "cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him," and faith has gained her victory. Then in due time the Lord's hand will be recognized in making all things work together for good to you according to his promise. This proof of your faith, says Peter, is more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire.—Z. '95:134, 135.

These Many Years

Deut. 8:2.

"These many years! What lessons they unfold
  Of grace and guidance through the wilderness,
From the same God that Israel of old
  In the Shekinah glory did possess.
How faithful he, through all my griefs and fears
And constant murmurings, these many years!

"God of the Covenant! From first to last,
  From when I stood within that sprinkled door
And o'er my guilt the avenging angel passed,
  Thy better angel has gone on before:
And naught but goodness all the way appears,
Unmerited and free, these many years!

"Thy presence wrought a pathway through the sea;
  Thy presence made the bitter water sweet;
And daily have thy hands prepared for me
  Sweet, precious morsels—lying at my feet.
'Twas but to stoop and taste the grace that cheers,
And start refreshed, through all these many years!

"What time I thirsted and earth's streams were dry,
  What time I wandered and my hope was gone,
Thy hand has brought a pure and full supply,
  And, by a loving pressure, lured me on.
How oft that hand hath wiped away my tears
And written 'Pardoned!' all these many years!

"And what of discipline thy love ordained
  Fell ever gently on this heart of mine;
Around its briers was my spirit trained
  To bring forth fruits of righteousness divine;
Wisdom in every check, and love appears
In every stroke throughout these many years!

"Lord, what I might have been my spirit knows—
  Rebellious, petulant, and apt to stray;
Lord, what I am, in spite of flesh and foes,
  I owe to grace that kept me in the way.
Thine be the glory! Merit disappears
As back I look upon these many years.

"Thine be the glory! Thou shalt have the praise
  For all thy dealings to my latest breath;
A daily Ebenezer will I raise,
  And sing Salvation through the vale of death—
To where the palm, the golden harp appears,
There to rehearse thy love through endless years."
—Z. '02:220.

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All who come into accord with the Lord shall see his face—that is, there will be no earth-born cloud between, no hindrances to the Father's love and favor, and his name shall be in their foreheads. They will confess him, they will have his likeness, the various elements which go to make up his glorious name and character will be theirs and will be manifest in their faces.—Z. '05:172.

This matter of living after the Spirit is a great contract, and one that needs continual watchfulness and prayer, lest we be overtaken in a fault—lest we let these precious things of [illegible]'s promise slip from us—lest we become overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches—lest our faith become weak and we faint by the way.—Z. '13:126.

The Ancient Worthies

Hebrews 11:1-19.

"Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them."—Psalm 22: 4.

ST. PAUL in this lesson throws upon the screen vivid pictures of the wonders wrought by faith in ancient times, and then he gives a partial roll-call of the heroes of those faith-battles, and a hasty word-painting of the nature of their triumphs. The foundation for his dissertation is found in the first verse of this study—"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." As water is not a solid upon which our feet can travel, except it be congealed in the form of ice, so likewise **belief**, in the ordinary sense of the word, is not sufficient as a foundation for our trust and onward progress, unless that belief be congealed, solidified, into a substantial **faith.**

Thus we should always clearly differentiate between credulity and faith—credulity, which is reprehensible, and faith, which is commendable. A crystallized faith, such as will carry us safely over the quicksands of ignorance and superstition, and bring us safely to the goal which God has marked out for us, needs more than human assurances, more than our own or other men's imaginations. True faith seeks for a positive Message from the Lord. It requires diligence in its endeavor to find that Message. Then it becomes an evidence, or proof, of things invisible.

By such a faith in God and His promise to give Israel the land of Canaan, the two elders sent to spy out the land brought back a good report. Their companions, lacking that faith, looked merely to the strength of the Canaanites, and brought back an unfavorable report. By faith we believe in the Divine Power which created the planets, and the Divine Power which has ordered the ages and dispensations of human affairs, and which will bring out of these, results which were not at first apparent, except by the eye of faith.

Abraham and Noah

By faith Abel offered to the Lord a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and obtained the witness of his approval by God's acceptance of his offering. His acceptance still speaks to us in Abel's favor, although he is dead. Abel's faith, no doubt, was the result of an endeavor to draw nearer to God—to appreciate what sin is and why the death penalty had come. From this standpoint of faith, he was led to offer sacrificially animals which typified the better sacrifices by which reconciliation will eventually be effected between God and humanity. . . .

Noah's faith manifested itself by his obedience in the building of an ark, at a time when there was no apparent excuse for such a building, since not a drop of rain had fallen from the time of man's creation until that time. (Genesis 2:5.) God blessed his faith, and made him a channel of blessing to his family.

The Faithless Not Acceptable Now

St. Paul makes a sweeping statement—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." On the basis of this statement we may say, then, that a person is pleasing to God in proportion as he has faith, and displeasing in proportion as he lacks faith. surely here we have an incentive to growth in faith, since all of God's people desire to be pleasing in His sight.

But faith is not alike easy with all mankind. Some can crystallize their faith in God and His promises into what is the same to them as an absolute knowledge, and on this faith-knowledge they can dare and do anything, and increasingly so. But this is not true of all. Some have less faith and are still children of God, and must needs pray, "Lord, increase our faith," and must seek to emulate the faith of others, and to be encouraged by the rewards of faith given to them. There are still others, however, to whom faith seems to be absolutely impossible. They cannot believe anything beyond their own five senses. They have never developed the sixth sense—of faith, confidence in the Lord.

What shall we say of these? Are they by this natural effect of heredity debarred from Divine favor to all eternity, because they do not please God—because "without faith it is impossible to please" Him? This is not the teaching of the Scriptures. They teach that a time is coming, under Messiah's gracious Kingdom, when the "knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth," reaching all classes. It will not be dependent upon faith, nor be merely for those who can exercise faith. The way will be made so clear and so plain that even a wayfaring man need not err in his endeavor to find and to know and to appreciate the Truth.

But in the present time faith is an indispensable matter according to Divine arrangement, because the Father is seeking a special class. Since these will be ushered into positions of great trust, as well as great honor and great service, they must needs be tempted, tested, in all points. Their faith in the Almighty must be implicit. Similarly, as we shall see, God has provided a special work for the Ancient Worthies mentioned in today's Study; and hence He has recognized as worthy for that work only such as could manifest great faith in Him and in His Word.

Abraham Looked for a City

Coming to Abraham, St. Paul recounts the different steps of his faith-demonstration. He responded to the call and came into Canaan, not knowing the particulars respecting it beforehand. By faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise as a stranger, and dwelt in tents, as did also Isaac and Jacob, who were his associates in the Promise, and heirs through him. Sarah also exercised faith. The Apostle declares that she was thus assisted in becoming the mother of Isaac, and became identified with that Promise, which declares that Abraham's seed, through her, shall yet be as the sands of the seashore—innumerable.

Summing up (v. 13), St. Paul declares that all these noble characters died in faith, without receiving the things that had been promised to them. Their rejoicing was in the faith-view which they had from afar. So strong was their faith that they were content to be pilgrims and strangers — nomads. Their traveling up and down showed that none of the cities or countries through which they passed from time to time, were wholly satisfactory to them. Yet they were not discontented in the sense that they wished to return to their former homeland, Haran. They were merely seeking a better country, a heavenly country, for they "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

At first glance, there is room for difference of opinion as respects the Apostle's meaning by these words. Did he mean that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were wanting to go to a heavenly country? Did he mean that they were looking for a place in the New Jerusalem, as the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is looking for that City—Messiah's Kingdom.

Such is not our thought. They had no Heavenly promises to think about. They had no Word of God to even suggest to them a change of nature from human to spirit being. All of their promises were of the earth, earthy—"All the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed after thee," etc. To our understanding the country they looked for is the Paradise of the now near future, when "the wilderness shall blossom as the rose and the solitary places shall be glad," and "streams shall break forth in the desert," and the blessing of the Lord shall supplant the curse of sin and death. This is the country which God purposes shall be the inheritance of humanity in general, when brought back into harmony with the Divine will, during Messiah's reign of righteousness.

When we read that Abraham sought "a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God," our minds naturally go to the New Jerusalem, the City of God, which is eventually to come down from God to earth. But that will not be a literal city. The entire passage is symbolical. The New Jerusalem will be the Messianic Kingdom. It will be the Capital, or center of Government, for the reorganized social order of earth. From it will go forth the Law of God, the knowledge of God, the blessing of God. From it will emanate power and authority, which for a thousand years will rule the world in righteousness, overthrow sin, death and all who are in sympathy with sin, and uplift all who love righteousness and Truth.

The New Jerusalem primarily will be the Church in glory, on the spirit plane, the Kingdom or rule of God, emanating from Messiah. But it will have its earthly representatives, too. The very ones to whom St. Paul here refers, found faithful in their time — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Prophets and all the Ancient Worthies—will be princes in the earth, representatives of the invisible Messiah and His Bride, backed by their full power and authority.—Psalm 45:16.

Of these Jesus spoke, saying, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy Prophets in the Kingdom." But He Himself has said, "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more." Of the Church the Apostle declares, "We shall be like Him." We all must be changed. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, on the spirit plane.

In substance, then, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the faithful of the past, waited for the promised resurrection of the dead, to be accomplished under the administration of Messiah's Government—a government being symbolically represented by a city, as Paris represents France; London represents Great Britain; Berlin, Germany; and Washington, the United States.—Z. '13: 60-62.

The Sale of a Birthright

Genesis 27: 22-34

"Esau . . . for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected."—Hebrews 12: 16, 17.

IN olden times, and still in some countries, the birthright belonged to the firstborn son. At the father's death the oldest son took his place at the head of the family; and the property, usually consisting of flocks and herds, became his possession. But today's lesson introduces us to a birthright which included much more than the earthly possessions. It included the inheritance of certain great Divine promises.

Abraham's estate went to Isaac, the others of the family receiving portions of it of and through him. Abraham was very rich, but the possession which he prized more than all earthly things was the Divine Promise, or Covenant, made with him—that the blessing of the Lord would specially be upon his seed, his posterity; and that eventually all nations of the earth would be blessed and favored of God through them.

This great promise Isaac had inherited. At the time of our lesson he was more than a hundred years old, and blind. He realized that the time had come for him to give his blessing to his heir, which blessing served as instead of a written will—the custom of today. He therefore instructed Esau, the hunter, to prepare him a special dinner of venison; thus to prepare to receive his blessing.

Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob—twins, Esau being the elder by a few moments only. But these twins, contrary to what is usual, were very dissimilar. Esau was hairy and ruddy, full of vigor, athletic, a hunter. Jacob was the reverse of this—smooth-skinned, dark-complexioned, a tent-man, or home-keeper, as in contrast with a hunter. Jacob seems to have inherited the qualities of his father, Esau more the vivacity of his mother. As temperamental opposites agree best, Isaac loved Esau most; while Rebecca, the mother, loved Jacob best.

The quiet, studious Jacob thought frequently of the great blessing God had promised to his grandfather Abraham, a share in which he apparently had missed by an accident of birth—by a few minutes only. The more he studied, the more he realized the value of that great Promise. Esau, on the contrary, full of animal spirit, thought more of the pleasures of the present life, and considered the Divine Promise as quite secondary and rather visionary.

These two men had passed thirty years of age, we know not how much. Esau was looking forward to his inheritance of the bulk of his father's property. Jacob, humiliated by his misfortune of birth, was downcast. He was fond of lentil soup, and had made some for himself. Just as he was about to partake, his brother Esau arrived on the scene hungry, having just returned from a chase, and begged to have Jacob's soup.

Then Jacob said to Esau, in substance, "You have every advantage. I have nothing but this soup. If you are willing, we will change places. You can have the soup and I will take the advantages." Esau replied, "I am tired to death, anyway. Give me the soup." Jacob answered, "I mean it, though, solemnly. If you swear that you will transfer the birthright to me, we will settle this matter; and the soup will be yours." Careless Esau swore away his birthright for a mess of pottage, and thus signified that he had no particular faith in God or in His promises.

Time passed. Esau married heathen wives when he was forty, and his father Isaac a hundred years old. A little later than this came the denouement—the imparting of the blessing to the one who bought, to the chagrin and anger of the one who most solemnly sold it.

Rebecca, the mother, had heard Isaac's instruction to Esau, and remembered that the birthright had been sold under oath to Jacob, her favorite. She explained the situation to Jacob and assured him, as his mother, that he would be right in personifying his brother Esau and receiving the blessing as his proxy or representative. She prepared the kind of stew which Isaac preferred, using the skins of kids to cover Jacob's neck and hands, that thus his father might mistake him for Esau. As he had bought all of Esau's rights, she thought it not improper to clothe him with Esau's garments, and instructed him that any blame coming from the deception would be hers. She took the entire responsibility. Jacob carried out the program and got the chief blessing.

Esau came in later with his venison stew, prepared to violate his contract made under oath, and was greatly disappointed to learn that the blessing was gone. It seemed more valuable then than when he had sold it. Although he received an inferior blessing from his father, he had the spirit of murder toward his brother for carrying out the terms and conditions incident to the birthright sale.

Earthly Loss Spiritual Gain

The account shows that Jacob's interest in the birthright blessing was not in the temporal or earthly inheritance, but in the spiritual Promise with which he was connected. He left his home and all the property to which he was heir, and went penniless to work for his uncle. Esau might have all the earthly possessions. Jacob carried with him, wherever he went, the birthright privilege of the Promise made to Abraham. This could not be alienated from him. With this he was rich.

St. Paul calls our attention to the fact that all these results were foreknown to God; and that at the birth of these two men it had been specifically declared that the elder should serve the younger. (Romans 9:10-13.) No doubt this Divine prophecy guided Rebecca in opposing and thwarting Isaac's love for Esau, which impelled him to give the blessing to the elder son, notwithstanding the Divine prophecy to the contrary.—Genesis 25:23.

Jacob Loved—Esau Loved Less

It is not for us to defend Jacob and his mother in their misrepresentation of the facts—in the deception of Isaac. It is not for us to recommend any others to follow his course. Nevertheless, it is proper that we should notice that the Bible distinctly tells us that God's loving favor was with Jacob. "Jacob have I loved." He was loved because of his reverential love for God and the great Oath-bound Promise.

Not a word of condemnation is given to Jacob anywhere in respect to this matter. No teacher in the name of the Lord, therefore, has the right to be wiser than what is written in God's Word. On the contrary, Esau is roundly denounced and is called profane and wicked, because he would sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, or any other consideration. The love of Jacob for the birthright is held up for our emulation. Esau's carelessness is held up as a warning that if any of us are careless of our birthright, we shall not only lose it, but lose the favor of God—Hebrews 12:15-17.

The Lesson of the Lost Birthright

The Apostle calls our attention to the fact that the experiences of these two men in the long ago were designed of the Lord to be typical. Abraham's natural seed is indeed to have a blessing, represented by Esau's blessing; but Abraham's Spiritual Seed is to have the greater blessing, typified by Jacob's inheritance. The earthly seed inherit the earthly blessings. The Spiritual Seed give up all their earthly rights, that they may be possessors of the spiritual promises, which the natural man cares not for. . . .

To the saintly few represented by Jacob, the obtaining of this life-right means self-sacrifice, the loss of earthly favors—the surrender of these to others who love the present world. To others it means the getting of a mess of pottage—earthly advantages of the present time—and the losing of a great prize, which Jesus likened to a "pearl of great price," to obtain which we should be willing to sell all we possess—to obtain a share in Messiah's

Kingdom, which shortly is to bless Israel and all the world.

No one can sell his birthright until he has a birthright. Hence the application of this in antitype is merely to the consecrated people of God. . . . And only these could sell it for the mess of pottage. The world may strive for its various prizes and pearls, and is measurably justified in so doing, because it has nothing else.

But the spirit-begotten heirs of the Divine Promise became such by promising absolute loyalty to the Lord and to the principles of Justice and Mercy. These must self-sacrificingly continue to walk in the Master's footsteps: else they cannot share with Him in the glorious outcome. Only those who attain a share in the Kingdom will have a share in its wonderful work of blessing and uplifting humanity. Let us, then, as the Apostle exhorts, lay aside every weight and every besetting sin, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus, the Author of our faith, until He shall become the Finisher of it.—Hebrews 12:1-3.—Z. '13:76-77.

Accepted and Rejected Sacrificers

GREAT were the anticipations of mother Eve in connection with her first-born son, Cain. Keenly she recollected the blessings of Eden and their loss through disobedience, and her memory clung to the implied promise contained in Jehovah's words to the effect that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—should crush the Evil One, and impliedly, in some sense of the word, thus accomplish a victory, and a release from some or all of the evils entailed through the divine sentence. It was in harmony with this that she named her first-born son Cain, which signifies, "acquired." In his birth she seemed to see a beginning of a fulfilment of the divine promise: this much of it had been acquired, for she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord"—the Lord has given the promised man, the promised seed. But she was mistaken: the divine promise would be fulfilled in due time, but Cain was not the promised seed, nor even in the line of that promise. This was soon manifested.

In due time another son was born, who was called Abel—a feeder or nourisher—he being looked to, probably, not so much as the deliverer promised as a helper in the battle for bread with the thorns and thistles, etc. The two grew to manhood, the one becoming a tiller of the soil, a farmer and gardener, and the other a herdsman or shepherd. In process of time it became apparent to both of these men that they should make acknowledgement to the Lord, their Creator, and that it would be but a reasonable service that they should present to him offerings expressive of their dependence on, and of their appreciation of his kindness; and naturally each one took as an offering that which was under his care.

Cain took of the fruits of his harvest, the results of his energy, as an offering to the Lord, and Abel took of his flocks as an offering. So far as the record goes, both were alike acceptable to the Lord up to this point: nor can we suppose that God would be displeased with Cain for bringing of the fruit of his labor as an offering. The fact that he had not respect to Cain's offering need not be understood to imply any prejudice on God's part against Cain, nor any intimation that he had sinned in bringing such an offering; neither did the Lord's acceptance of Abel's offering necessarily imply a prejudice in his favor, nor that he was the holier of the two. The acceptance of the one and the rejection of the other was merely designed to show the kind of sacrifice which the Lord was pleased to have offered and the kind which he was not pleased to accept. Cain should have learned the lesson quickly, and should have secured animal sacrifices and have presented his offering in this form to the Lord, and doubtless it would have been accepted as was Abel's.

Probably neither of the brothers knew at the time why the Lord accepted the animal sacrifices only, but later on no doubt they would have been instructed that this was typical, because the Lord intended ultimately to accept of a great antitypical sacrifice for sins which he himself would provide in the person of the man Christ Jesus, and that this sacrifice could best be represented and typified by the sacrifice of animals, and thus the presentation of the thought that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins. —Heb. 9:22.

But Cain, as the first-born, had no doubt already been recognized by his parents as the chief of the two brothers, and no doubt knew of his parents' expectations respecting him, that ultimately he would be the instrument of Jehovah in the crushing of evil. And no doubt this thought had engendered a certain amount of pride in his heart. He felt himself to be the elect of God, the highly honored one of the family; and correspondingly sharp must have been his feeling of disappointment when his offering of the fruits of the field, chosen with great care, and offered no doubt with sincere reverence, met with no sign of divine acceptance, while the offering of his younger brother, whom his parents had viewed as a mere assistant, was accepted of the Lord, probably by fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice. (1 Kings 18:38.) The chagrin of this one who considered himself the priest and mediator of the family, and God's specially chosen agent, may be imagined; and whatever of love and kindness and brotherly feeling had previously prevailed, fell before the combination of giant powers suddenly developed in his bosom—pride, chagrin, envy,—and in the heat of his passion and disappointment he smote his brother and slew him.

We are not to think of Cain's crime as a first-degree murder, deliberately plotted and executed: but rather as "manslaughter," a crime committed on the spur of the moment and under the influence of sharp disappointment. The inspired record tells us, "He was of [the spirit or disposition of] the wicked one, and slew his brother." (1 John 3:12.) He partook of the spirit of the wicked one, of Satan's evil spirit. Satan's spirit was one of **ambition** and **pride.** Already highly favored of God as one of the highest angels, he was not content with his great honors and blessings, but was ambitious, desirous of attaining still greater influence and power than God had been pleased to grant him: and this unlawful ambition obtaining control led him not only to rebel against the divine covenant, but led him also to become the "murderer" (John 8:44) of our first parents, that thus he might attain control over them,—the object of his ambition.

So, for aught we know, Cain may not only have felt the chagrin of seeing the younger brother's offering accepted, but may have felt that somehow or other this younger brother stood between him and the attaining of his ambitions, and that his removal would be a means for the maintenance of his own claims and position. How short-sighted was the Adversary, that he should think to outgeneral Jehovah, and to **exalt himself** and erect a rival Kingdom! Soon Satan's folly will be manifested, when the Lord's due time shall come, and the one who **humbled himself** in obedience to the Father's will shall be exalted to kingly power and authority, and to the position at the Father's right hand in the Kingdom of the universe; and when the one who attempted the usurpation shall be utterly destroyed. And how foolish was Cain's supposition that fighting against God would avail him anything, or that the destruction of his brother would leave him the heir of the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head! And how similarly foolish are all who foster ambition and pride—even in respect to the promises of God. How sure it is to lead to the murder-spirit of brother-hatred. (1 John 3:15.) And, on the contrary, how wise are those who follow the example of our dear Redeemer, quenching all ambition in devotion to God and burying pride under love and humility. Let us, therefore, as the Apostle exhorts — humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time, even as he highly exalted our Lord Jesus.—1 Pet. 5:5, 6; Phil. 2:5-12.

Had Cain, on the contrary, yielded to an humble and loving spirit, he would have said to his brother Abel, "My brother, I congratulate you, that the Lord has so remarkably accepted your offering; I rejoice with you, and now that I have learned better what things the Lord is pleased to accept in sacrifice, I myself also will hasten to present an offering like yours, and I will gladly exchange with you some of the fruit of my labors for some suitable sacrifice from your flocks." And who can doubt that Cain's offering, if brought in this manner, would have been accepted of the Lord, as was Abel's? The thing lacking was the humble spirit, the spirit of love, without which he could not be acceptable with God, nor appreciate his privilege of offering the acceptable sacrifice.

This same lesson of the first-born occupying the position of favor and opportunity, yet being unworthy and unready to use it, is illustrated in Abraham's sons. First was Ishmael, who for years was looked upon as the heir of Abraham and the promises made to him, and who continued to so regard himself even after Isaac, the child of promise, was born,—mocking and persecuting him. Similarly again, Esau, as the first-born of Isaac, held the birth-right to the same promise, yet not appreciating it rightly, sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage, and then strove to retain it unjustly to himself, and was angry with the one who did rightly value it.

The Apostle points out to us (Gal. 4:22-31) that these things were allegories or pictures, written aforetime for our admonition and instruction, that we through these illustrations might gather the thought that God foreknew and designed that in bringing in the true Seed (Christ Jesus, the Head, and the Church, his body) there should be just such an experience as was pictured in these three illustrations. The first seed of promise was Moses and his house, fleshly Israel. These were represented in Cain and Ishmael and Esau—not that there were no exceptions in the nation of fleshly Israel, but that the nation as a whole was thus typified.

Israel, like Cain, considered itself as the first-born and heir of the divine promise, and it brought to the Lord an offering of works under its Law Covenant, represented in Cain's offering of the fruits of the ground, the labor of his hands; but God did not accept the imperfect works of Israel as satisfying unto justification. Israel, like Ishmael, was for years recognized as the heir to the Abrahamic promises, and felt arrogant in connection therewith; yet never was the real seed of Abraham meant by Jehovah when he made the promise that Abraham's seed should be great and should bless all the families of the earth. Nevertheless Israel, like Ishmael, mocked at the spiritual Israel, the true heir of the divine favors, and persecuted those that were born (begotten) after the spirit. Israel, like Esau, had indeed a title to the blessing, as being the first-born, and had they appreciated that blessing they might indeed have been the heirs of the promise; but failing rightly to appreciate it they had more respect and love for earthly comforts and advantages than for the spiritual, and sacrificed the latter for the former, even as Esau sold his birthright for the mess of pottage. Nevertheless, while not highly esteeming the divine favors represented in the promise made to Abraham, the natural Israelite at the close of the Jewish age was disposed to claim that promise and to resent the thought that it should pass by them and be given to Spiritual Israel, represented by Jacob, the second-born. And as Esau's anger was so fierce that Jacob was obliged to flee for his life, even so spiritual Israel was put in jeopardy of life by natural Israel. The Isaac-class was persecuted by the Ishmael class, and the Abel class was slain by the Cain class.

It at first seems strange that God's favored ones should thus appear to be worsted in every instance, and be obliged to flee from, or be killed by those whom God rejected. But herein is a great spiritual lesson, for we perceive that as the natural Israel was represented by Moses and his house, so the spiritual Israel is represented by Christ and his house; and we see that the very method by which Christ and his followers are to gain the victory in this present time is through obedience unto God "even unto death"—and that thus being obedient unto death, Christ and his Church, which is his body, and which the Apostle assures us is to fill up that which is behind of his afflictions (Col. 1:24), become the heirs of the world, the inheritors of the promises. Why? Because there can be no crushing of the Evil One and his power until first of all the sacrifice for sin, the ransom-price for the sinner, shall be paid: even as there can be no blessing of all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham until, first of all, that Seed of Abraham shall have redeemed all the families of the earth by offering the sacrifice for sins which God has all along indicated must first be paid, and must include a sacrifice of life—for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

Here, then, we may see not only in the plain declarations of the New Testament, but in all the shadowy pictures which prophesied the same in the Old Testament, that it must needs be that Christ Head and body) shall suffer and be raised from the dead before these great and precious promises of the Almighty to mother Eve and to father Abraham can have their fulfilment. . . .

In all of these illustrations it is well that we note the differences of spirit or disposition, that the haughty, the proud, the ambitious and self-confident spirit is the one which leads to disappointment, and is not of the Lord; and that the humble, teachable, obedient spirit or disposition is that which is recognized by the Lord; and in proportion as we are seeking, therefore, to make our calling and election sure to membership in this Seed of Abraham, represented in Isaac, represented in Jacob, and represented in Abel, let us seek to bring to the Lord such sacrifices as he is pleased to receive (Heb. 13:16), and to be exercised by such a spirit of faith, of trust and of obedience as was manifested by the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus. He is our perfect Pattern; he walked this way successfully, and has not only opened it for us through the merit of his sacrifice, and accepted us as his followers in it, but also he has promised us his grace and help through the Word and by his spirit and by his providence all the journey through; assuring us that having begun a good work in us he is both able and willing to complete it. Let us then, like him, bring unto the Father the acceptable sacrifices of our consecrated lives, made acceptable to the Lord's altar through the atonement sacrifice which our dear Redeemer gave on our behalf. Thus we shall at once and always be accepted in the Beloved.—Rom. 12:1; 5:1, 2. —Z. '01: 85-88.

God's Instrument in Preparation

Exodus 2:11-25.

37

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." —Matthews 5: 5.

THE deliberateness of Divine providence often astounds us. Our lives are so brief, our limitations so many, that any plans we may have must be pushed to completion as rapidly as we are able. But not so with the Almighty, who is "from everlasting to everlasting God." He has unlimited time at His disposal, and accordingly is working out His sovereign will with great deliberation. It is a comfort to His people to be assured that He knew the end from the beginning, and is working all things according to the counsel of His own will. Bible Students are being blessed in proportion as they are learning that the Divine will is always a good will—just, wise and loving.

The education of Moses is briefly summed up in the Scriptures in the statement that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Legend tells us something of his schooling in the philosophies of that time, and declares that he was a successful Egyptian general; but it is for us to follow the Bible account. The time was nearing when God intended to bring the Israelites out of Egypt into the land which He had promised Abraham should be theirs—a pictorial illustration of the still more wonderful deliverance by the greater than Moses, which is now nearing.

God's providences may be noted in respect to the experiences of Moses, who is credited by the Lord with having been "the meekest man in all the earth." God wanted a meek man for the important position which He intended Moses to fill. And the lessons and experiences given to Moses helped to make him meek. Who cannot see that, if he had been proud and arrogant, he would have been unfit for the duties and responsibilities which devolved upon him as the leader of his people out of Egypt to the borders of Canaan? Perhaps no man in the world had a more difficult task than that represented in those forty years of Moses' experience. We may be sure that he was prepared for the ordeal only by the experiences of the eighty years of his life which preceded the Exodus.

✓ The adopted son of the princess of Egypt, Moses must have been a court favorite, and in danger of cultivating pride and arrogance. As an offset to this, he had continually before him the fact that his features were Jewish, and that thus every one had knowledge of his identity with the despised and oppressed people. The tendency of this would naturally be toward one of two courses: Either he would seek to ignore the Hebrews and to become more and more identified with the Egyptians, or he would exercise faith in the special promises of which his people were heirs as children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This was perhaps his first test. Would he prove loyal to God and to those Divine promises relating to the future? Would his faith be equal to the task of casting in his lot with the enslaved and oppressed people, and thus losing caste with Pharaoh, his family and all the Egyptians of influence? St. Paul notes that Moses was a victor in respect to these matters. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the riches and honors which might have been his as an adopted member of the royal family. (Hebrews 11:24-26.) We may well surmise that if he had taken side with the Egyptians, he might even have become the reigning Pharaoh.

To Moses the Promise which God made to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and to Jacob, and which still waits its fulfilment, was more to be desired than all the riches and honors of earth. Moses stood well this test in respect to his faith and loyalty. He would be on God's side at any cost! Similarly, there have always been tests, both to the Natural Israelites and to the Spiritual Israelites, and these tests are still applied in our day. The world holds out inducements to the Jew to abandon his covenant relationship with God, as it also holds out inducements to the Spiritual Israelite to abandon his spiritual relationship with God.

It is still true that the friendship of the world means enmity with God, and the friendship with God means the enmity of the world, so widely different and opposed is the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light and everything related thereto. It is still as true today as in Moses' time that "Whosoever will live godly [in this present time] shall suffer persecution." But it shall not always be so. A great change is impending. Those who love righteousness will be exalted, blessed, while those who love sin will be restrained and punished.

Moses Discouraged, Heartbroken

Trusting in the Lord's Promise, Moses believed that the time had come for the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage. He knew well of his miraculous preservation, and had the assurance of God's Promise that this signified that God had a special work for him to do. He was ready and anxious to begin that work. He knew not of his own unreadiness. Nothing was further from his thought than that he would require forty years more of special schooling. Supposing that the time had come to strike for liberty, he was on the alert. He would inspire his people with confidence in him. They should know that although he was educated in the court of Pharaoh, his sympathies were with them, and that he could be relied upon as their leader.

An occasion to show his zeal for his brethren came when he saw an Egyptian abusing one of them unjustly. He threw himself into the conflict. The Egyptian was killed in the scuffle. The Israelite was delivered. Moses perceived that none of the Egyptians knew of the matter, so he buried the victim in the sand. He doubted not that his brethren would quietly pass the word along that he was their friend and defender, and that thus they would look to him with confidence as their leader, when God's providence would open the door for them to leave Egypt. But all these dreams faded when, on the following day, he perceived that there was no such loyalty among his brethren as he had expected, and that instead of being his followers they were ready to deliver him to the Egyptian authorities for having rendered assistance to one of their race.

Thoroughly discouraged and fearing for his life, Moses fled to the wilderness of Midian. It looked as though all of his loyalty and all of his forty years of education and development had gone to waste. He had supposed that he was being prepared to be the captain of the Lord's host and to lead it forth. In one hour all of his hopes were dashed and he was a fugitive, fearing to show his face in the palace amongst the Egyptians or amongst those of his own race. "A wasted life." was undoubtedly his comment—forty years spent in cherishing hopes and ambitions never to be realized.

Moses, Jethro's Shepherd

As the fugitive sat upon the casing of a well, shepherds brought their flocks to it for water. Amongst the sheep-tenders were Jethro's daughters, and opposing them some ungallant shepherds, who not only did not help, but hindered them. Moses, full of the instinct of justice, not only took their part, but helped by drawing water for their flocks, and incidentally walked with them toward their home. Jethro was appreciative of the stranger, who did not at the time disclose his identity. He who was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, and who had been one of the generals of Egypt, was now thoroughly crestfallen, meek, tractable, teachable.

Moses married one of Jethro's daughters, and continued to be a humble shepherd for forty years. He did not at the time understand the Lord's providence in his affairs, but he was all those years learning a most important lesson of meekness, of full submission to the Divine will. When the lesson had been learned, God's time had come to put His thus doubly educated servant into a most important place, for which he would have never been qualified without just such experiences.

God's dealings with Moses illustrate the general principles of His dealing with all those of whom He would make special servants prepared for special services. Our Lord Jesus in the Heavenly courts testified His loyalty and fidelity to the Almighty. As a means toward his further exaltation the opportunity was given Him of becoming the Savior of mankind, and thus of carrying out the Divine Program. He gladly responded. "Although He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." (Hebrews 5:8.) And the Apostle declares that because of this demonstration of His full submission to the Father's will "unto death, even the death of the cross," therefore God highly exalted Him in His resurrection, not only as high as He was before, but higher—"far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named.—Philippians 2:9-11; Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Peter 3:22.—Z. '13:170, 171.

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"Without me ye can do nothing." God's favor during the Jewish age was manifested in earthly prosperities; but not so in this age, when spiritual prosperity alone indicates God's favor, and when not many rich or great are called, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom. And, if God be with us and for us, who can be against us? What will their opposition amount to? They may indeed cause us pain or inconvenience, but they cannot harm us or injure our highest interests; because the Almighty has given assurance that "All things shall work for good to those who love him, to the called ones in his purpose."

But what must be the character of this class whom God is with and for; and for whose blessing he intervenes in all of life's affairs?

Ah! they are a peculiar people—zealous of good works—zealous for righteousness—zealous for God and his favor—zealous for his service and the smile of his face—faithful, trustful, meek. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God"; now we have these assurances of God's favors which will surely continue with us if we seek earnestly to follow the footsteps of our dear Redeemer—walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Let us, therefore, remember to purge ourselves of envy, malice, selfishness, including self-conceit; that we may be vessels unto honor and meet for our Master's service.—Z. '01:300.

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As the form of the Son of God was seen with the Hebrews in the fiery furnace, so unseen, the Lord is present with those who trust him and who, because of faithfulness to him and to his word, come into tribulation. How beautifully this is expressed in the familiar hymn,

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee. I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."
—Z. '99:171.

◇

Christian mothers should be swift to avail themselves of their privileges in the training of their children—their responsibility in this direction. Let no mother think that this work is insignificant and without its influence. Children who are properly trained to reverence and obey the Word of God and the commands of their parents, and to respect the Golden Rule in all their dealings with their playmates and neighbors, and who are taught order, promptness, punctuality, system and truthfulness, are prepared not only for their own blessing in life, but also for that of all with whom they come into contact. Thus every good mother's influence extends and multiplies as the days go by.—Z. '17:217.

◇

Especially in the case of their children, consecrated parents may well feel that, now in the dawning of the Millennial age, they have special privileges in prayer; for of all classes these are most surely the heirs of restitution blessings. The children of all believers are justified through the faith of their parents up to the time they reach years of mental discretion. (1 Cor. 7:14.) Hence they are heirs of the earthly blessings, restitution, etc. And now that the Restitution Times are upon us, we should feel great confidence in asking health and strength and life for such. It would seem indeed that now the children of believers might live on down into the full sunlight of Millennial glory and blessing, when none will die except such as sin wilfully against that light and favor. Yet in all our requests we cannot ask otherwise than as the Master did, saying—Nevertheless not my will but thine be done. And it should be the aim and patient endeavor of each parent to bring his children as nearly as possible to the proper point of full consecration—the reasonable service of all.—Z. '96:170.

◇

It would not at all surprise us if, in the beginning of the Millennial age, not only the nation of Israel would receive the blessing of the Lord lost at the beginning of this Gospel age and become his representative people in the world—the Church having been taken from the world, glorified spirit beings—but neither would it surprise us if, in the Lord's providence, some miracle were wrought by which the Dead Sea would become connected with the Mediterranean, possibly refreshed also by some such river as is described by Ezekiel, a picture of the symbolical river of life flowing from the New Jerusalem. But however interested we might be in the thought of such a literal fulfilment of this prophecy, our interest is still greater in the fulfilment of it as a symbol in accord with the river of Revelation. From this symbolical standpoint the Dead Sea represents the dead world, and the coming of life-giving waters would represent the resurrection power of the Lord and the Church exercised amongst men during the Millennial age. As the Apostle expresses it, it would mean, for the Gentiles, life from the dead.—Z. '05:269, 270.

◇

Our advice is that all the Lord's people put the Kingdom and its interests first, in word, in thought, in deed—giving merely what time is absolutely necessary for the procurement of the things needful for our earthly comforts and the comfort of those dependent on us. Assuredly thus we would be following the example of the Master, pleasing to the Father and helpful to each other. Thus we would be examples to our neighbors, as well as be preparing ourselves for the Kingdom.—Z. '15:126.

◇

Although the Holy Spirit was not given to the Ancient Worthies in the same sense that it is given to the Church, it was nevertheless the manifestation of God's favor toward them in their affairs—Psa. 51:11.—Z. '15:139.

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J. T. Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 117

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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Jehovah's Abiding Presence With His People

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."
—Exodus 33:14.

THE children of Israel had come out of Egypt; they had crossed the Red Sea, and had come to Mount Sinai. Moses had gone up into the Mount, had received the tables of the Law, and had come down and found the nation in idolatry, worshipping the golden calf which they had made. While Moses was still in the Mount, the Lord had told him that Israel had already turned aside from the true God to idols, and was offering sacrifice to a molten calf as the god who had brought them forth out of Egypt; and He instructed Moses to go down to the people. The wrath of God was hot against them, and He proposed to Moses that He consume them and make of him a great nation. But Moses besought the Lord for Israel, and the Lord was entreated of him and spared the nation from annihilation, and promised him that he should still be their leader.

Then Moses went down from the Mount. He realized that Israel had grievously sinned, and his anger was kindled against them. He cast down the tables of the Law, which were in his hands, and broke them, when he saw and heard the dancing and feasting and shouting around the idol which they had set up for themselves. Here was a nation delivered by God from Egyptian bondage. The Red Sea had opened for them to pass over, by the power of Jehovah. They had also received various blessings along their way, notable proofs of Divine guidance. Yet in spite of all this, here was rebellion and idolatry! What could he expect of a people who had so little appreciation of God, that they were quickly turned aside? Even Moses' own brother, Aaron, led astray by the insistence of the people, felt it necessary to co-operate with them in the making of the golden calf.

Then Moses took the calf which they had made, and burned it in fire, ground it to powder, scattered it upon the water and compelled the children of Israel to drink of it. He reproved Aaron, and then stood in the gate of the camp and said to all the people, "Who is on Jehovah's side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." —Exodus 32:26-28.

Moses' Cry and Its Answer

The day following, Moses explained to the people how great was the sin of which they had been guilty and told them that he would go to the Lord in prayer, if peradventure he might make atonement for their sin. Then he went to the Lord in earnest supplication, pleading that if God would not forgive His people, He would also blot out his name from His book. But God answered, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." He promised to send His angel before Moses, but assured him that He was not yet through dealing with Israel for their iniquity. He instructed Moses to tell them of their stiffneckedness and to command them in His name to put off their ornaments, that He might know what course He would pursue with them.

The people obeyed God. They laid aside their ornaments, and humbled themselves and worshipped the Lord. Moses, heavy of heart, felt that unless God would in some special way give him the necessary wisdom and grace for the great task of leading so perverse a people into the inheritance which the Lord had promised them if they would serve Him, he would be utterly insufficient for the undertaking. So he again appealed to God in earnest prayer. He told Him of his trepidation and his earnest desire for His sustaining help and His presence with him in all the way, pleading, This is too great a work for me!

Then the Lord assured Moses that He would go with him, that he should have His presence throughout the entire journey to the Promised Land; for he had found grace in His sight. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses then besought the Lord, "Show me Thy glory." It was here that God put Moses into the cleft of a rock and covered him with His hand while He passed by and let Moses see His glory from behind, saying, "No man can see My face and live."

When God speaks of His presence with His servants we are not to think of His being with them in His bodily presence, but by His Spirit and through His angelic messengers, sustaining blessing and guiding them. He protects them from whatever will harm them. He watches over their every interest and tenderly cares for them.

Idea of God's Omnipresence an Error

It is a common, but erroneous, thought that God is actually present in person everywhere. We do not understand the Scriptures to so teach. This generally prevailing error that God is everywhere present in person, and at the same time, has led many to think of Him as being not a person at all, but merely an influence. We understand the Bible presentation of the matter to be that God has a personal, bodily presence, aside from the power and influence which He exerts; and that He has a central seat of government, where He resides.

"Heaven is My Throne, the earth is My footstool," says Jehovah. The One who has His seat in Heaven and whose footstool is the earth is a great God! But this is, of course, a forceful figure of speech, showing His all-embracing power and control. God does not actually sit in a certain part of His Universe and have His literal feet in another part. The language of Scripture accommodates itself to the mind of man, and speaks of God as if He possessed the same bodily members as humanity. But actually we know not what a spirit body is like. "It doth not yet appear," even to the saints of the Lord who are still in the flesh.

We understand that the bodily presence of Jehovah is in Heaven. Everything in the Bible teaches us that He is very great—infinite in power. We read that "the Lord looketh down from Heaven: He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth." (Psalm 33:13, 14.) He has beheld men in their distress, and has provided for their deliverance "in due time." But we should clearly distinguish between this thought of God's looking down from Heaven and the thought that He is personally present on earth. We can see a mile off, or five miles off, by the power of our sight. We can be a hundred or more feet away and be present by the power of our voice: or aided by the modern invention of the telephone, we can be present by our voice several hundred miles away. In that sense of the word the Lord is present everywhere throughout His mighty Universe, and His power can be exerted everywhere. He has means by which He can be cognizant of all earthly affairs and of matters pertaining to all His great domain.

We have these powers only to a very limited extent. The telegraph, the telephone, the telescope, etc., are all means by which our presence, power and influence are extended to a certain degree; but our powers are limited to this small planet, except as we further extend them by means of prayer, and thus set in motion influences whose extent we are not now able to fathom. But this latter privilege is only for a few at present. Not many thus have access to the Power which controls the Universe. And these who have the privilege of coming to the mighty King of Heaven may come only in His appointed way, subject to the conditions which He has made.

We can place no limitations upon the power of Jehovah. The inventions of this Time of the End, which have increased our powers of communication, and so have united all parts of the globe, give us but a very faint conception of the infinite powers of the Almighty God. These inventions, we believe, will continue to increase and multiply through the incoming Age, thus adding more and more to the powers and blessings of mankind. These will give mankind a greater and greater appreciation of the majesty, glory and might of their Creator as they come to know Him as He is and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Yet no human mind, even in perfection, will be able to comprehend the Mighty Maker of the Universe.

God's Guidance Through the Wilderness

So God promised Moses that His presence, His power and sustaining grace should go with him all the way. He wished Him to understand that he was not to perform his great work alone, without all-sufficient backing. "I will be with you," was the promise. The Lord's presence was indeed with the children of Israel in a very marked manner—continually with them from the time they crossed the Red Sea, guiding by blessings or by chastisements, as they should need. He was with them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and by His presence in the Shekinah glory which covered the Mercy-seat in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. After the Tabernacle was set up by God's instruction, these manifestations of His presence, His power and His watchful care never failed. The pillar of cloud and of fire guided their journeyings; and when these rested, it was an indication from God that they were to abide where they were until the pillar of cloud or fire again moved from its place.

Moses had said to the Lord, "If Thy presence go not with us, send us not up hence"—this is too great a task for any man to accomplish alone. But if Thy presence will continue with us, if I can be shown Thy will and be continually directed by Thee, then I will be able to lead this people through the wilderness journey to the land of Canaan. Frequently the Lord spoke to Moses through the Tabernacle. Thus we see that the promise of His presence with him was fulfilled. The Lord gave him rest. He lived to be one hundred and twenty years old, yet was not his strength impaired nor his eye dim. We remember that there was a time when Moses realized that the work of judging the people was too great for him. He took the matter to the Lord, and seventy judges were then chosen to share his burden. The matters that were too difficult for them they brought to Moses. He went to God with all his difficulties and burdens and he had continual blessing.

The Lesson to Spiritual Israel

The experiences of Natural Israel have very important lessons for Israel according to the Spirit. A people originally a part of the world, we have been invited to come out from the world and to journey to a new Country, to come into a Heavenly inheritance. We are marching toward the glorious Kingdom promised us if we are faithful. There are trials and difficulties along the way. But our God has promised us, as He promised Moses His servant, that His presence shall go with us. Sometimes He seems to withdraw from us and to leave us to ourselves; but He does not really do so. He tests our loyalty and our faith in Him by withholding the sense of His presence at times.

Shall we, then, like Israel of old, conclude that God is no more with us, and turn again to the gods we formerly worshiped—gods of wealth or of pleasure, gods worshiped by the nations around us? Shall we give ourselves up to revelry worldly merry-making and sin? Shall we forget all the way by which our God has led us, all the great deliverances which the past of our lives have recorded? Shall anything—either "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, or any other thing in creation, be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" Surely not!

The closer we live to the Lord, and the greater our faith, the more we shall realize the Divine direction, and the more we shall make use of the means He has provided for our strengthening and upholding. We may call upon Him in time of trouble; we may go to Him in prayer; and He never fails those who put their trust in Him and earnestly seek to walk in His appointed way. This being true, we may go forth upon our journey in perfect trust and confidence. Having consecrated our all to the Lord, we are to seek for His guidance, for His presence is with us, in all the affairs of our life.

Few have such mighty burdens to carry as Moses had. But all of God's children have burdens to bear, and important responsibilities are resting upon each of us who have taken upon us the vows of our God. Each of the true Israel of God, is privileged to have the continual guidance of the Lord in every experience of our wilderness journey. Heavenly Manna is furnished for our daily sustenance. The Water of Life flows out to us for our daily refreshing, from the smitten Rock of Ages. Our Father's chastening rod restrains us when we are in danger, or when we wander into any forbidden path. How lovingly He brings us back into the right way, and heals our wounds, and graciously forgives our stumblings and weaknesses! Surely we may have implicit confidence in our Heavenly Guide. Thus we may rest in Him and be kept in perfect peace. Our hearts can truly exclaim with the poet:

"He has guided my steps where I could not see,
By ways that I had not known;
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise His name for the pleasant palms
And the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillar of fire by night,
And the sheltering cloud by day.

"There is light for me on the trackless wild
As the wonders of old I trace,
When the God of the whole earth went before
To search me a resting place!
Hath He changed for me? Nay, He changeth not;
He will bring me by some new way,
Through fire and flood and each crafty foe,
As safely as yesterday."

He who so faithfully cared for Israel after the flesh, who were a perverse and fickle people, will surely care more abundantly for His true, Spiritual Israel, who love Him supremely and are daily seeking more fully to know His will that they may do it.

The Apostle Paul, in warning Spiritual Israel not to fall after the same example of unbelief of Natural Israel, and thus lose their hold on the Lord, says, "We who have **believed** do enter into **rest**." (Hebrews 4:3.) It was unbelief that led to the disobedience and perversity of Israel after the flesh, and that led to their final rejection by the Lord as His favored people, to whom should apply the most precious promises. They have lost forever as a nation the special place of favor which was theirs by inheritance. What a lesson this should be to Spiritual Israel! And yet we see that today the great mass of Spiritual Israel are falling "after the same example of unbelief." And they, too, will lose the chief place of favor, which was offered them when it was taken from unbelieving Natural Israel. Only a faithful "remnant" of both Natural and Spiritual Israel will gain the great inheritance held out to them by the Lord.

The Glorious Inheritance of Spiritual Israel.

Those who prove faithful during the present Dispensation shall inherit the most precious things which God has to offer, the secret things which were for ages kept hidden, but are now revealed to the true saints of God. The faithful of past ages shall inherit the earth as rulers and princes over mankind, during the glorious Reign of Messiah. Gathered to these will be Natural Israel then living. They shall have a rich heritage. What remains for them in the ages of glory to follow, we may not know with certainty, but it will be a blessed portion, we may be sure.

The faithful of the present Age have been raised to "sit in Heavenly places with Christ Jesus"—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah." These faithful ones are the twelve tribes of Israel who are to reign with Him. These—only a Little Flock, in all 144,000—are of the faithful remnant of Natural Israel, who were gathered at the beginning of this Gospel Age, and the faithful remnant from the Gentile Church of this Age. (Revelation 7:4-8; 14:1-5.) These have "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and which none others can know. "My peace I give unto you," whispers the Master to these. We have a rest of faith now; and we are assured that we who have entered into this rest shall in due time, if we faint not, enter into the complete "rest that remaineth for the people of God." This rest we shall enter into when we experience our glorious "change" in the First Resurrection, when we are transformed in body and made like our Lord, and shall see and know as we are now seen and known of God. We shall then be blessed with the exceeding glory which He has promised—immortality, His own nature—and a seat with our Saviour in His Throne.

The God of Israel is indeed ever present with His true people. He never forgets us, but is constantly looking out for our interests, guarding us in every time of danger, providing for our every need, both temporal and spiritual, whatever is best for the interest of the New Creature. He reads every thought of our hearts; He marks every impulse of devotion and love to Him; He shapes all the influences surrounding our lives for our disciplining and refining, and hearkens to our every cry for aid and comfort and sympathy and fellowship with Him. He is never for even a moment forgetful or off guard. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." (Psalm 121.) If we call Him in the busy hours of the day, or in the silent watches of the night, He is near to uphold and sustain and protect, whether we can realize His presence at all times or not.

How blessed the assurance of such constant, abiding care and faithfulness! No real child of God is devoid of these evidences of his precious relationship to the Father—the God of Israel. And the saints who have been called with the Heavenly Calling, and are faithfully responding, are His true Israel in the highest sense, heirs of all His choicest promises. How goodly a heritage is ours!—Z. '14:295-297.

"Speak, Lord, for Thy Servant Heareth"

1 Samuel 3: 6-14.

SAMUEL, the Prophet, is one of the grand, strong characters of Old Testament times. The story of his early devotion to the Lord and his obedience and perseverance in well doing, constitutes a grand lesson, not only for young Christians, but also for those more advanced in years, including parents. As the story of Ruth gives us glimpses of a time of life of the Israelites such as is generally obscured by the records of wars and troubles, so also does the story of Samuel. He was of the tribe of Levi, already consecrated to the Lord, and accepted. An insight into the deep piety of his parents is given in the first chapter of the Book. A child born under such circumstances of prayer and devotion to the Lord, could not, under natural laws, fail to be noble minded and religiously inclined. . . .

God's Mouthpiece Twelve Years Old

The story of the Lord's first message to Samuel is beautiful in its simplicity. The boy evidently was accustomed to obeying the calls of Eli for various services at various times, and to this end had his sleeping apartments near by, Eli being advanced in life, about seventy-eight years. Three times the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, "Here am I," and went to Eli. It was after the third call that Eli instructed him to say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

The record is that for a long time such a message from the Lord had been "precious," that is, scarce: Eli, although a good man, and sincere and faithful and kind in his dealings with Samuel, had been too lax in his dealings with his own sons, who were priests and had much to do with the services of the Tabernacle, and who, therefore, in every sense of the word should have been pious and exemplary men. The Lord had already sent Eli a warning message respecting his sons who were profligate and open transgressors, not only in financial affairs, but also in morals. Eli should have realized his responsibilities and should have checked their wrong course and, if necessary, should have dismissed them from the service of the Tabernacle even though they were his own sons; but in proportion as he had grown weak in mind and body, they had grown strong, self-willed and impious, and the old man seems not to have had the necessary strength of character to deal with them. The Lord's message delivered to Samuel was in respect to Eli's family and the punishment that should come upon them for their sins, which were much more grievous in view of the fact that they were the exemplars and instructors of the people.

A Kind and Indulgent Parent

There are two kinds of unfaithful parents:

(1) The harsh, cruel, wicked, who not only inbreed an evil disposition, but inculcate the same by precept and example. If both parents be of this type the child's condition is almost a hopeless one for the present life. The restitution conditions of the Millennium will be needed to eradicate the taint. Yet where one parent belongs to God the result may under divine providence be the reverse—the child may not only be better born, but discerning the evil of his parent's course may thereby be repelled and prepared to take the opposite course.

(2) Some "kind and indulgent parents" are very unfaithful to their trust. With our children partakers of the general weaknesses of the race, a kindness and indulgence which allow noxious weeds to develop in their characters is gross unkindness, very reprehensible in the sight of God and those in accord with his Word. Indeed, it is possible that this term, "kind and indulgent parent," is frequently used very inappropriately. In many instances it would be more truthful if less polite to say, "A weak and incompetent parent."

Surely all proper parents from the divine viewpoint will be kind to their children, and all such should be glad to be indulgent also, to the extent that the best interests of the child will permit—and not one inch further. But while the correcting rod must not be spared when necessary nor used when unnecessary, nor too severely—yet the best rule where possible, where the disposition of the child will permit, is **the rule of love.** Beginning early the parents' love combined with firmness should so mould the child's mind that it would have absolute confidence in the parents' love and in their loyalty to God's regulations in all of life's interests. To such a child the look of sadness and regret or the tear of sorrow on the parent's face will be more efficacious than many blows and much violent language.

Judge Eli Unfaithful to God

Judge Eli's weakness as a parent led him to unfaithfulness to God. His is not a sample of an "overcoming" character; he more nearly represented the character of the "Great Company." He had many good qualities. No vulgar sin is laid at his door. In many respects he placed the honor of God far beyond his personal interests. We see no manifestation of selfish ambition on his part opposing Samuel's advancement. Indeed to his credit be it noted that he fathered Samuel well. He disapproved the course of his sons, but, aged, he failed of the courage to denounce their course with proper vigor, as the Lord's words seem to intimate. We are not to forget, either, that among the twelve directly under our Lord's instruction one exercising his free will became a traitor. We fear that, however **trained,** those who turn out badly are generally not well-endowed in their begettal: though here also we remember Satan as an example of a perfect begetting and perfect training, which were lost before the energy of his ambitions.

Eli's experience with his wayward sons calls for our sympathy, even though he brought his difficulties upon himself by reason of his neglect of the early training of them in the ways of the Lord, in the ways of his righteousness. Doubtless he often looked at the faithful lad who ministered to him so patiently and industriously, and wished that his sons had been of similar disposition: but the time so to wish advantageously and profitably was long gone by; they should have been begotten in the spirit of consecration, and trained in conformity therewith, and the Lord's Word for it is that when they were old they would not have departed from it. There is a lesson for parents here, too: the fact that the Lord's service is to be considered of primary importance and is to be defended even at the expense of their own flesh and blood.

The Voice of the Lord

In the morning Samuel hesitated to tell his kind master, Eli, the unfavorable message he had received of the Lord in the night; but Eli was anxious to know whatever the Lord had to say, and importuned until Samuel told him all. There is a good lesson here for the Lord's people—a lesson of humility and kindness; the lad might have felt puffed up to think that the Lord, who so seldom spoke to any, had now spoken to him; he might have felt himself honored and above Eli, in that the message spoke of the discomfiture of the latter; pride might have made him boastful and inconsiderate of the feelings of his master so that he would have taken delight in telling him of the calamities that would come, and how greatly he had been honored of the Lord. Samuel, on the contrary, exhibited the spirit of meekness, apparently not even considering the honor that had come to him; but, rather, sympathizing with his master, he would have preferred not to burden his heart with the message of calamity. . . .

The Lord speaks in our day in a different manner from that in which he spoke in olden times: as the Scriptures declare, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.) The Word of the Lord is still precious and scarce in that it is not, at the present time, given to all, but only to a certain class; as it is written, "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." The majority of mankind hath no ear to hear at the present time, no eye to see the glorious beauty of God's plan. As the Apostle explains, "The god of this world hath blinded their minds"—earthly things, earthly ambitions, earthly hopes, earthly calls and voices, distract their attention, fill their capacity; but blessed are our eyes for they see, and our ears for they hear, and blessed shall we be if, like Samuel, when we hear the Lord's message we respond promptly, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Such as thus respond shall be taught of God—by the Word of his grace—the words of the Lord Jesus, and the words of his inspired apostles — instructed and guided in the understanding of these through the holy Spirit, through the various helps and channels and agents which the Lord is pleased to use. . . .

He who would continue to be taught of the Lord must continue to listen for his voice, continue to be in the hearing and obeying attitude of heart. The difficulty with some apparently is that their own wills are not fully extinct, dead—that their consecration is not complete; hence while consecrated enough to wish not to disobey the Lord's voice, they have certain ideas of their own respecting what his voice should say, and they prefer to interpret his message in conformity to their own preferences: they will to do more or less their own wills, and will to hear the Lord's voice directing them in accordance with their own wills. This is a most dangerous situation and is generally accompanied by self-conceit and self-assertion and will ultimately lead far from the Christian's goal. Let each of us resolve by the Lord's grace that we will out of an honest heart continually seek to hear the pure Word of God, and that with a desire to obey it as far as we are able.—Z. '07:345-348.

7

We Reap What We Sow

Galatians 6:1-10.

8 nov. 18.

"God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Verse 7.

IT is true that every person has a responsibility for his every wilful act and word. It is true, in a sense, that every human being will have a harvest considerably in accord with his own wilful course in life. Evidently, therefore, every human being could take a profitable lesson from the words of our Golden Text and receive a blessing in proportion as he would follow the spirit of that Text.

However, we are not to forget that the Apostle is not addressing the worldly, but the saintly. He is addressing the Church; and the Church is composed exclusively of persons who have left the world, turned their backs upon sin, accepted the Lord Jesus as their Savior and Advocate with the Father, and who have consecrated their lives wholly and unreservedly to the doing of the Divine will. Such, begotten of the Holy Spirit, are in the Bible styled New Creatures in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) To these, "old things have passed away; all things have become new"—new hopes, new aims, new ambitions, new prospects, new standards. . . .

According to the Bible, God has great and precious provisions for the world in the future, but not in the present time. . . . The Royal Family of the future, when completed and perfected by the First or Chief Resurrection (1 Peter 2:9) will, as God's Kingdom, deal with the world of mankind, ruling, instructing, uplifting, blessing, all the willing and obedient. Then the world will have its chance for sowing and reaping.—Acts 3:19-23.

The Soil and the Seed

The heart of the Christian is consecrated soil from the start—from the time that God accepts him as a child. Under Divine instructions special flowers and fruits are to be cultivated. These are styled fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. All Christians obedient to the Voice from Heaven are seeking to eradicate and destroy the weeds of sin and selfishness, which spring naturally in their flesh because of heredity.

Originally, Father Adam's flesh was perfect. The weeds of sin had not yet been planted. But now, there is no pure soil; sin-weeds are everywhere. Every Christian who would have the consecrated garden of his heart fruitful, pleasing to the Lord, must wage a vigorous and continuous battle against the weeds of sin, in order that his heart may be in the condition to receive the good seed commended in the Divine Word.

Vigilance is necessary, not only to keep down the weeds, but also to keep the soil in proper condition, that the seed may enter, germinate and bring forth good fruitage. The Christian must also battle against the thorns, which our Lord Jesus mentions as illustrating the cares of the present life and the deceitfulness of riches, which would choke the Word and make the life unfruitful, unprofitable. —Matthew 13:22.

The Christian who would expect to receive the reward of the Master's "Well done; enter into the joy of thy Lord!" must be very diligent in the sowing of the proper seeds in the garden of his heart. Acts, words and thoughts are the good seeds; and they must be sown carefully and persistently. They will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness — meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. And these fruits and flowers of the Holy Spirit abounding in the garden of the heart, St. Peter tells us, will make such a Christian ready for an abundant entrance "into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:11.

It is important that we sow good seed; and there is just one storehouse from which this is supplied —the Word of God. Whoever gives most attention to the words of our Lord Jesus through the Apostles and the Prophets, and whoever keeps this seed pure, free from contamination with worldly wisdom —science falsely so-called—and from the traditions of men—creeds—is best prepared to produce fruits and flowers to the Master's approval.

What It Is to Sow to the Flesh

A mistake made by some of the Lord's people is that of sowing to the flesh, after having consecrated themselves to the Lord and having agreed to sow merely to the Spirit—in harmony with the Lord's will. Sowing to the flesh does not mean a thorough rebellion against the Lord, but rather the procurement and the sowing of bad seed — unprofitable seed. The spending of time, energy, money, etc., in the pursuit of pleasure or of earthly things or riches, whether successful or not, is sowing to the flesh.

The tendency of all such neglect of the Christian's covenant with his God is toward corruption —toward death. Many, indeed, may retrace their steps after finding that they have spent their talents improperly. But in such cases they have wasted time, energy and opportunity, and if they gain eternal life at all, it will doubtless be on a less glorious plane than if they had been faithful from the very beginning. Let us exhort ourselves and our fellows to sow to the Spirit—in accord with the glorious promises which God has made to us, which we have accepted, and to which we should be bending every energy in the development of the fruits and graces of the Spirit.

Treatment of Fellow Christians

In the context the Apostle urges that each individual Christian should seek to bear his own burden rather than to lean upon the brethren. Each is to remember his own personal responsibility and not to get weary in well doing. Each is to remember the reaping time, the harvest time, when all who do not faint, all who do not grow weary, but who persevere, will receive their reward.

Additionally, the Apostle urges that while seeking to do, each for himself, we should be tenderhearted toward each other, yea, toward all men. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all, but especially to them who are of the Household of Faith."

Respecting those who are of the Household of Faith the Apostle urges that if we find a brother overtaken in a fault, we should show our own spirituality in the manifestation of the spirit of meekness and kindness toward the one at fault. We should bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ. We should cultivate the spirit of meekness by remembering that we ourselves might at some time be overtaken in a fault—in the future, if we had not in the past. We should learn to think humbly of ourselves. We are really nothing when compared with that which is perfect. Our standing with the Lord is not because of human perfection, but because of proper wills—good intentions —fully consecrated hearts.—Z. '16:153.

We can see most clearly why none can be of the Kingdom class unless they shall develop faith and character above and beyond that of the world in general. We can see why these should be called upon to bear the good fruits; we can see why they must walk the narrow way of self-denial, self-sacrifice and character development in order to be fitted and prepared for the great work the Lord has for them to do for the world in the coming age—in the Millennium.—Z. '04:44.

The Lord's grace and bounty are manifold; they come to us in numberless forms, in things both spiritual and temporal. Some of us may receive a larger number of these favors than others, but in that event the responsibility or stewardship is proportionately increased; and the Apostle urges that we should seek to serve out to others whatever gifts we possess. He who waters others shall himself be watered. This principle applies to everything, both temporal and spiritual.—Z. '03:365.

The Christian's Attitude in the Duties of Life

nev:25

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."—Rom. 12:11.

THE word **business** has a very broad signification. Whatever we do we are to do all unto the Lord; or rather, whatsoever we do we should do **altogether** unto the Lord. With the Christian, the chief business of life is to glorify God, to serve Him, and, incidentally, as directed by the Lord, to serve the brethren, to serve the Truth, to serve righteousness, to serve all men as he has opportunity, "doing good unto all, especially to the household of faith." In our text the word **business** seems to include any occupation, of any kind, that would be approved of the Lord. It would not do for us to say, Be not slothful in the liquor business or the tobacco business, for we are to give our attention only to those occupations which we believe have the Lord's approval.

The expression, "not slothful," is equivalent to the expression, **not lazy,** not indolent. The Apostle's thought seems to be that any matter proper to be done should have the intelligent and active attention of him whose duty or privilege it is. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing zealously, well. The Apostle's thought is that we are, first of all, to see that our business is a worthy one; and secondly, to prosecute it faithfully. If it is to provide money for either our personal needs or the Lord's work, we should prosecute that business with energy, with alacrity and with appreciation of the privilege, as done to Him. We should not be slothful or careless in any way.

A certain amount of provision for our temporal need is necessary. **How much time** is to be given thus is a thing for each to determine for himself. After we have made a consecration to the Lord, to give our lives in His service, there is very little we can give at best. We should see that we "redeem the time," buy it back from the affairs of this life, as far as reasonably possible, in order to secure the more of it for the special service of the Truth. This does not mean that we should leave our families dependent upon others. We should care for our proper interests. We should not be **overcharged,** but should have a proper care for those dependent upon us. As for our own requirement, having food and raiment, we should be content and not wish to accumulate for a long period of life.

The word **fervent** signifies **very hot,** to boil. The thought that the Apostle gives is that whatsoever we do we should do heartily, with our might, as unto the Lord. The one who takes the course of doing whatever he does in a careless manner forms a slothful habit, which is a drag on him all through life. Whatever we do we should do fervently. We are the Lord's and whatever business we have is His. The Lord is pleased that we should be energetic in our affairs. If any one is in a business where he is violating conscience, he should get out of it.

Should Not Be Burdened With Anxious Care

The Lord's people should not worry or take anxious thought respecting tomorrow. The Scriptures imply, however, that we should be provident and careful, laying by in store, that we may be prepared to do something for friends who may need. Dollars laid by merely represent so many days of labor saved. We should not use all of our resources upon the immediate present, but exercise self-control, to the end that we may have good results in the future. This rule will apply to food and clothing, also. If our store is small, we should not wonder where the next suit of clothes will come from. If we had the next suit it might be stolen. Neither should we wonder, If I accept the Truth, what shall I do if my neighbors and friends turn against me? What if I should get into great disrepute on account of the Truth? We should leave all such things to the Lord. If we need persecutions, we hope that He will let them come to us. If in that way He chooses to make the Truth worth something to us, we should be glad. "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."—2 Tim. 3:12.

On the other hand, the Lord does not intend us to go through life in a careless manner, happy-go-lucky, so to speak. We are to have a proper thought for the day. What are the responsibilities of today? What are the cares? As the Scriptures enjoin, be "not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." We are to have a great deal of zeal. We are not to worry over things that may happen tomorrow, but have faith that God will be with us tomorrow, and give grace sufficient for us when it shall come. If the Lord's people are living faithfully they will have a great deal to think about every day. They will not need to go out in advance to worry about tomorrow. We shall have plenty to do if we give attention to the present difficulties, and go to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain grace and strength to help today.

Our Lord assures us that if the main thought of our hearts is concerning His service and the promotion of righteousness and the attainment of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him, then we need carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As His disciples we shall have trials and tribulations enough day by day, and shall need daily to lean upon the Bridegroom's arm as we seek to walk the "narrow way." Sufficient for each day will be the evil of itself; and thanks be to God, we have also His promise that daily His grace shall be sufficient for us.

To those who are the Lord's consecrated people it is the greatest privilege imaginable to serve the Lord. The Lord is looking to see to what extent we are willing to sacrifice earthly things, earthly approval, that we may have His approval and hear His "Well done!"

Let all who would run the race successfully look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family

—whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music, or art, or upon business, politics, or pleasures, or in pampering pride and appetite—then, as unfaithful servants, we shall sooner or later go into "outer darkness."—Z. '11:344, 345.

Jealousy and Envy Punished

Numbers 12.

> "Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly."—1 Corinthians 13:4, 5.

ST. PAUL includes envy, and therefore jealousy, in his enumerations of the works of the flesh and the Devil—together with anger, malice, hatred and strife. These are works of the Devil in that they are characteristics of Satan. According to the Bible account, Satan's ambition led him to envy the Almighty and ultimately to attempt to establish in the earth, with man as his subject, a rival empire to the Heavenly domain of Jehovah. His ambition and jealousy led to strife or opposition—led to a misrepresentation of the Divine character in order to deceive our first parents.

The evil traits mentioned are works of the flesh in the sense that after our race, poisoned by Satan, had come under Divine sentence, the dying process, which Satan encouraged, included evil works, evil desires of every kind. More and more our race has become subject to these adverse influences, as it has become weak, dying, unbalanced.

St. Paul urges all of the Lord's people to put off these Satanic characteristics and to adopt instead the Divine characteristics — those which have the Divine approval, and which work in us and make us more and more Godlike. These are described as meekness, gentleness, peace, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love. We are assured that those who will ultimately become God's saintly people on the highest plane of Heavenly glory will have these characteristics well developed, dominant. The Apostle indicates that such will be granted an abundant entrance into the "everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:11.

That Kingdom will not represent all the saved of humanity, but will be the Divine agency for carrying salvation to all the families of the earth. . . . All the members of that Kingdom, as St. Paul declares, must be copies of God's dear Son, our Redeemer—not copies in the flesh, but copies in our hearts and in our intentions. This will mean to be as nearly perfect in the flesh, as nearly in harmony with the Divine requirements, as possible.

Indeed, the Bible clearly teaches that all who will ever attain everlasting life and Divine favor, even on the earthly plane as perfect men in an earthly body, must entirely get rid of everything appertaining to the spirit of Satan and sin; that they must thus get back to the original image and likeness of God as exemplified in Adam before he sinned in the Garden.

Miriam's Jealousy and Envy

The lesson of today's Bible Study tells us of a serious error made by Aaron and Miriam, the brother and the sister of Moses, both his seniors. We may safely conclude that while the two participated in the sin, Miriam's was the leading spirit. This view is fully justified by the outcome of the lesson, which shows that God's punishment rested upon her, and not upon Aaron.

The start of the matter was a question of family pride. Moses had married an Ethiopian, or Cushite, woman. We know not if this was his first wife, whom he had married in the land of Midian, and who only now joined him as the Israelites were about to start on their journey toward Canaan. Some have surmised that Moses' first wife had died, and that Zipporah was his second wife. No matter which, the fact remains that at this time she came to live with Moses in the Camp of Israel, and thus became, as wife of the great and influential leader, the first lady of the nation.

Previous to this, Miriam had undoubtedly filled the office of chief lady. It was but natural that she should feel the loss of her position and of the influence which went with it. She felt especially keenly upon the subject as she reflected that her new sister-in-law was of an alien race. This fact seemed to give Miriam's jealousy a religious footing; and she doubtless reasoned to herself, and convinced herself, that her hostility to her sister-in-law was not based upon jealousy, but upon a high moral ground, affecting the honor of God, the honor of His nation, Israel, and the future possibilities of Abraham's seed in the Land of Promise.

We are to remember that it was this same Miriam who, as the little maiden, watched Pharaoh's daughter when she went to the bathing place on the Nile where Moses was found in the little basket of bulrushes. This same Miriam hastened to bring to the premises her mother to be the nurse for the foundling, Moses. This same Miriam, doubtless, with Aaron had enjoyed special privileges in the confidence of Moses in respect to all the affairs of Israel under the Lord's leadings. This same Miriam had been recognized of the Lord as a prophetess. She it was who, with her timbrels, after the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites and after the sea had returned with destruction upon their Egyptian pursuers, led the Israelitish women in the song of triumph.

Thus seen, there was what we might call an excuse for Miriam's jealousy. Indeed, we cannot imagine any jealousy which could not find an excuse for its existence—good or bad. No good people can harbor jealousy, envy, etc., without in some manner deluding themselves into thinking that the peculiar circumstances of their case fully justify their attitude.

After thinking slightingly of her brother as foolish in his course, Miriam became more and more convinced that God would not think of using especially in His service one who had thus lost caste with herself. Her poisoned mind began to see evidences that the Lord had forsaken Moses, and that otherwise he would not have fallen into what she was sure was a great mistake. She communicated her fears to her brother Aaron, and the two doubtless thought seriously and prayed much respecting the sad fall of Israel's leader and the necessity thus laid upon them to make good his dereliction.

Aaron apparently must have been a weak character, and merely used and useful as the mouthpiece of Moses. He showed much weakness on this occasion, as he did during Moses' absence in the mountain, when in response to the persuasion of the Israelites he made for them the golden calf and assisted them in their idolatrous worship, which they desired. Miriam also probably assented at that time that such would be the only course to take to satisfy the rebellious spirit of the people.

The text implies that Miriam began to spread her seditious suggestions throughout the Camp of Israel, referring to her brother Aaron as holding similar sentiments. The people were to be prepared and the Lord was to be helped, of course, by the primary suggestion that Moses was not the only leader of the nation, that Miriam and Aaron were also prophets and in relationship with the Lord in exactly the same manner and degree as Moses. This insidious preparation of the people would make ready for the expected time when God would entirely disown Moses and speak entirely through Miriam, Aaron being her mouthpiece.

And the Lord Heard It

Too often do the Lord's people and others forget that the Lord is not inattentive to His own business, the interests of His own cause, but is working all things according to the counsel of His own will. As Bible students, we should more and more learn to appreciate this great fact and to remember that prosperity in the Lord's work cannot come by might or human power or cunning, but only by and in harmony with the Lord's Spirit, the Lord's Power, the Lord's Will.

The Lord nipped the conspiracy in the bud by suddenly calling Moses, Aaron and Miriam into His presence before the Tabernacle. All three obeyed the summons, Miriam doubtless supposing that now the moment had come when the Lord would show that she had rightly divined His intentions in ousting Moses from the leadership and appointing herself. The denouement, however, was very different. God did, indeed, declare that Miriam and Aaron had to some extent occupied the place of prophets, in that God had been pleased so to use them; but with equal distinctness the Lord pointed out that His dealing with Moses was on a very much higher plane. To him God had spoken directly, not through dreams and visions, but in plain language. Thus the ambitions which were the grounds of the jealousy, envy and conspiracy and evil speaking, God promptly set aside.

Additionally, however, God gave a punishment. As the Divine Presence, represented by the pillar of cloud, departed from them, Moses and Aaron beheld that their sister Miriam had been smitten with leprosy. Aaron recognized that all this signified that he had assisted and upheld his sister in a sinful course. He recognized that his brother Moses was indeed the chief of God's people; and to him Aaron uttered this cry of distress and prayer for relief, saying, "O my lord, lay not, I pray thee, this sin upon us; for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead!"

Then Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee!" And God heard Moses and healed her then, but directed that she should be treated as every other person was treated whose leprosy was declared to be healed. All such were required to remain seven days outside the Camp, under inspection, to see that no further symptoms of the disease appeared, before they would be admitted to the Camp again.

"The Law Was a Shadow"

The Apostle explains to us that the various things commanded Israel under their Law Covenant were prophetic shadows illustrating higher things—things appertaining to Spiritual Israel. Thus, for instance, the disease of leprosy, practically incurable, except by Divine interposition, was a type of sin; and the seven days of excommunication from the favored people represented a full and complete period of tests as respects a putting away of sin, a cleansing, a return to harmony with God.

Various lessons might be drawn from today's Study. But the one in which all can probably best agree is that jealousy, envy, based upon selfishness, is amongst the most deceptive of all sins and one very serious in the sight of God, whatever may be thought of it by others. . . .

The prompt punishment of Miriam and its effect remind us of the fact that such prompt dealing with sin will be the regular order under the Messianic Kingdom and will bring prompt results then. All men realize to some extent that whosoever sins will suffer; but the penalties, or sufferings, resulting from sin are often so far removed as not to be identified by the sufferer. Hence with many the lesson is lost.—Z. '13:269, 270.

◇

Immanuel's government, from the time of its beginning to the time it will be transferred to the Father, will be one continuous success; there will be no breaks or vicissitudes. "Of the increase of his government there will be no end." The discipline and order which he will establish will be on such a firm basis that day by day will see it more secure; until finally the consummation having been reached, the testings all being complete, the wilfully incorrigible having been destroyed, the dominion without ending will be passed to the Father.—Z. '05:383.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

The glorious blessings of Messiah's Kingdom will steal over the world gradually, coming through **human channels.**—Z. '13:5.

◆

As the Father had a due time for the Son in which to accomplish his work, so, doubtless, divine providence is over-ruling and guiding the affairs of each member of the Body of Christ so that not even a hair of their heads could fall without divine notice; and so, their lives being precious in the Father's sight cannot be taken from them in any manner until their time shall have come—until they shall have finished the work which the Father has for them to do.—Z. '04:14.

◆

Each sowing to the Spirit, each resistance to the desires of the flesh toward selfishness, etc., and each exercise of the new mind, of the new will, in spiritual directions toward the things that are pure, the things that are noble, the things that are good, the things that are true, is a sowing to the Spirit, which will bring forth additional fruits of the Spirit, graces of the Spirit, and which, persevered in, will ultimately bring us in accord with the Lord's gracious promises and arrangements—everlasting life and the Kingdom.—Z. '04:57.

◆

Faith is a matter of cultivation, of development. The same apostles who cried out in terror when the storm was upon the Sea of Galilee gradually grew stronger and stronger in faith until, as the records show, they could and did trust the Lord in his absence and where they could not trace him. Similarly it should be a part of our daily lesson to cultivate trust in the Lord, and to think of the experiences in the past in our lives and all of these lessons in his Word, that thus our faith in him may become rooted and grounded.—Z. '04:89.

◆

Even the most insignificant error may hide some truth and thus prove an open switch for Satan to use in side-tracking us, should our hearts ever get out of harmony with the Lord and his plan.—Z. '95:225.

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Old Corn Gems

No. 118

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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The Tried and Proven People

"The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."
—Deut. 13: 3.

GOD had entered into a Covenant with the Children of Israel, in harmony with His promise made to Abraham their father. Four hundred and thirty years after His Covenant with Abraham, the Lord had called Israel out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and had made them a nation in the wilderness. He had proposed to them that if they would keep His Law and His statutes He would make of them a great people, above all other peoples of the earth. They had entered into this Covenant with the Lord, and had declared that they were very glad to accept this Divine arrangement and to have the opportunity of carrying God's blessing eventually to all mankind. But now Israel was about to cross over Jordan and enter the land of Promise. Before parting from them, Moses explained to them that it was not enough that they had accepted the conditions of the Covenant and become the Lord's people: God would test them, would prove them.

Why should God prove them? As a people they had left Egypt under the leadership of the chosen servant of God. They had crossed the Red Sea, and sung their praises for deliverance. They had journeyed forty years in the wilderness. They had been refreshed with the water from the smitten rock. They had been fed with the bread from Heaven. God knew all about them when He took them for His people. What more could He wish?

Ah! but their fathers had rebelled against God, and had fallen in the wilderness because of sin, because they had murmured against Him whom they had covenanted to serve. And now Moses explained that God wished to prove to what extent the Covenant would be kept by these their children. He said: You have entered into this agreement which God made with your fathers. You have made a consecration to be the servants of the Lord. Now, are you ready to perform the terms of your agreement? "The Lord your God doth prove you, to see whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."—Deuteronomy 13:3.

God's Wonderful Care Over Israel

Do you appreciate God? was the query. Do you realize the value of His kindness? Do you truly love Him with all your being—with all your powers, your strength? Are you fully surrendered to the Lord? For "thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness—to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no. He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; thou shalt not lack anything in it. . . . When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments and His judgments and His statutes, which I command thee this day."—Deuteronomy 8:2-11.

Supreme Favors to Spiritual Israel

What an exhortation! What an incentive to faithfulness! Who would not worship and serve such a God! And what a wonderful application can Spiritual Israel make of this Scripture! How marvelously has our God led us, His Covenant people, through the wilderness of this world, and provided for our needs day by day! How the chastenings of His loving hand have kept our feet from wandering; or if we have turned at any time to the right hand, or to the left, how has His love drawn us back! And has He not brought us into a good land, a land of brooks of water, a land of fountains and depths, a land of oil olive and honey, a land wherein we eat bread, the Bread of Heaven, without scarceness? Truly, we have not lacked anything in it. If Israel of old had reason to prove their gratitude and love to God, how much more reason have we!

Moses' Dying Message

After Moses had reminded Israel of all the loving kindnesses of the Lord on their behalf and of their solemn Covenant, he proclaimed to them the ordinances of the Lord by which they were to be governed, and then gave them most solemn warnings of the consequences of forgetting God and breaking their Covenant. This discourse, of which our text is a part, and which comprises the larger part of the Book of Deuteronomy, was delivered to Israel just before Moses' death in Mount Nebo—the highest point of the ridge of Pisgah—whence the Lord showed him all the land of Canaan, and where he was buried. God had told Moses that He should not go over Jordan, because of his disobedience at the waters of Meribah, when he smote the rock contrary to the command of God. This discourse was his last message to Israel, and is very touching and impressive.

Moses finished his message with these words: "I call Heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed mayest live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Such words were very forceful at such a time; for Moses had told them that he was about to die, and that God would give them a new leader to go with them over Jordan.

Only "Israelites Indeed" Are Sought

As a matter of fact, we know that Israel did not live up to their engagement, as God had assured Moses would be the case. They were like unto their fathers who died in the wilderness. During the centuries of their dwelling in Canaan, however, there were quite a large number who individually proved worthy of the blessing and favor of the Lord. St. Paul refers to these in Hebrews 11, and declares their loyalty to God. These are to have a "better resurrection" than their brethren or than mankind in general. The Apostle mentions such characters as Moses, Samuel, David, and many of the prophets and others who were not so honored and prominent as these in an earthly way, but who had the honor of having pleased God.

Their serving the Lord with all their heart and soul could not justify them legally; for they were imperfect and blemished through the fall. But all the powers they had were devoted to the Lord. These became heirs of God—not heirs in the highest sense, because this opportunity was not open in their time. No one could gain this highest position until the Redeemer had come and opened the way. So all these worthy ones who lived prior to the Christian Era, died in faith, not having received the promise, i.e., its fulfilment. But "they looked for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." And soon these faithful servants of the Lord will "stand up for their portion."

But the Church must all first be perfected. In this class our Lord Jesus holds the highest place, and by the sacrifice of Himself He opened the door of opportunity to His brethren of the elect class. "Israelites indeed" were honored with this invitation to become joint-heirs with Christ, sons of God. Only those who love God with all their heart and soul are "Israelites indeed." The average Israelite of our Lord's day was not fit to be of this select company; only "Israelites indeed" accepted the invitation. . . .

It is not because we are more nearly perfect in the flesh that we have obtained great favor, but because the Lord opened the way, and because we had a love for righteousness and an honesty of heart. Those who lived before our time, during the Law Covenant Dispensation and prior to it, needed justification also; and the same Redeemer who has purchased us has through His sacrifice provided justification for them, that they too may ultimately come into the blessed relationship of sons of God.

Is God's Knowledge Limited?

The way in which this expression of our text is put might give the impression that God does not know the hearts of men. The Scriptures assure us that God can fully read the heart, "that all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"—no thought or purpose of our heart is hidden from Him. But when we think of the Almighty—what He knows or what He does not know—we are at a loss to form an opinion. So far as our experience goes, there is no one who could know just what he himself would do under any given condition in the future. We may think what we would probably do, but we are not sure. And if we are not sure that we ourselves know what we would do, we cannot see how any one else could know what we would do. We cannot by any mental process understand how it would be possible for God to know what we might do tomorrow, unless He coerced our mind or hedged up our way, so that we could do only one certain thing.

In the matter of the Gentile Times, God permitted various governments—Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome—to rule the world successively. We can understand how He could say: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." The tendency of sin in the fallen race would lead people to go to any length, if not restrained. In such ways, we can understand how God would know in advance. He knows, too, when the Church was selected, as He has a definite Plan concerning this selection. He knew that Satan would have the disposition to raise up an Anti-Christ System—a counterfeit of the true Church. He knew how many saints within a given time could be developed under those conditions, and how much time would thus be necessary to gather His predestinated number: for He purposed to permit Satan to operate within certain bounds for the testing of His professed people.

It would not be wise for us to say that there are some things that God could not know, that He does not know—or that there is **anything** that God does not know—but we can say that we are not able to **understand** how God could know what we shall think tomorrow, or next week. God made man a free moral agent; and He always respects this free agency, and gives us the opportunity of exercising our own wills. He is not pleased to have people who would work automatically. He permits us to make our own decisions. He has given us His Word, He gives us all needed assistances, and He will help all who are seeking to walk in His way. But these questions, we trust, will all be solved for us ere long. We know that God proves His professed people and demonstrates their heart attitude just as if He did not know—perhaps only as a proof to angels and men.

What Will the Issue Be?

God is proving us now. There are many who have never made a covenant with God at all. But He is testing all those who have made a covenant, as to whether or not it is a heart-consecration—whether it is **self** first or **God** first—whether it is success in life or the honor of God and the doing of His will. He is trying us because He wishes to find out who will be worthy of a place with His Son, who will be worthy to reign with Him in the Kingdom, and who will not.

Ours, therefore, is not only the high honor of being sons of God during this Age, but also of being proved for the lasting rewards. The Jews that knowingly lived in violation of their Law lost merely their temporal life, but did not forfeit their opportunity for the eternal life. But if any of us do likewise, we shall forfeit the life eternal. Therefore, the dealing of God with us goes beyond His dealing with Natural Israel. Our responsibility, then, is so much the greater, and the issue is final.

The Kingdom is designed only for those who by the grace of God shall in heart, in character, become like the Master, in that they will love the Lord with all their heart, with all their soul (all their present capacity), and be able to say: "Not My will, but Thine, O Lord, be done." No other heart condition than this of entire submission to God in Christ can make us acceptable for the Kingdom: for no other condition represents full loyalty and full love to God. Let us not forget that all the Heavenly glories and blessings, which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," God has prepared only for them who love Him supremely—and who prove this love. But His grace will be sufficient for our every need.

"Then let us bid each doubt remove—
Those doubts that fain would rise—
And view the Canaan that we love
With unbeclouded eyes!
Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore!"
—Z. '14: 262-264.

Our Unseen Guardians

2 Kings 6: 8-23.

Golden Text:—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psa. 34: 7.

OUR lesson is based upon a miracle which the Lord wrought through Elisha the Prophet. The kingdom of Syria lay to the north and east of the kingdom of Israel, and the two were not separated by natural boundaries, such as mountains, seas, etc. Consequently wars between the two countries were not infrequent. We recall that in one of these raids of the Syrians upon the Israelites, Naaman's wife's maid was taken captive. We recall that when Naaman came to the king of Israel the latter thought his coming merely a pretext for another war. Our lesson calls our attention to a later determination upon the part of the king of Syria to invade Israel, get spoil, etc. Several plans of attack were devised to raid one city or another, but each time these raids were frustrated, for the Syrian army found the cities they attacked freshly prepared for defence. The king concluded there was a traitor in his court or camp who disclosed his secret plans and arrangements to the king of Israel, and instituted a search for the traitor. His counsellors, however, had heard of Elisha—perhaps through Naaman or those who accompanied him at the time of his healing. These explained to the king of Syria that a more likely interpretation of the matter was that the Prophet Elisha revealed to Israel's king all plots and schemes against the interests of the nation.

Although the king was evidently a man of force, he was not wise in his determination to ascertain the location of Elisha and to capture him first, and thus to secure a free hand in looting the cities of Israel. He might have known that if Elisha could inform the king, he could be equally well informed in matters respecting himself. But thus it is with all who leave the wisdom of God out of their calculations. The Apostle sums up the matter for them, saying, The wisdom of man is as foolishness with God, for the world by its wisdom knows not God and does not take into consideration the boundlessness of his wisdom and power. The Christian, on the contrary, recognizing divine power and wisdom and coming into accord with the same, is thereby blessed. Whatever was the measure of his wisdom and prudence as a natural man, this would be certainly intensified by his participation in the wisdom which cometh from above—"the spirit of a sound mind," the Spirit of the Lord.

As soon as the king learned that Elisha was at the little town of Dothan he sent an army, including horses and chariots, to surround the city and to make sure of capturing the Prophet. The latter doubtless understood in advance, but working in harmony with the Lord's arrangement he did not flee the city. He was entirely restful in mind respecting the matter, but his servant was greatly alarmed—he thought of the Prophet and himself being carried prisoners to Syria to thenceforth be bondmen, etc. Elisha, however, comforted him with assurances respecting the divine power which encompassed them, much greater than the power of their enemies. Then, not only as a lesson to the servant, but also doubtless intended of the Lord as a lesson for his people all the way down through the ages, Elisha prayed that the young man's eyes might be opened that he might see and realize the true situation. At once the servant perceived that all around the city the entire hill was amply protected against the surrounding hosts—"horses and chariots of fire" around and about Elisha and himself. We must assume that the horses and chariots of fire were in the nature of a vision granted to the servant and to us, as illustrative of the divine power and protection given. Thus viewed, what the servant saw was an active parable, a picture similar to the symbolic pictures of Revelation—serving the intended purpose most thoroughly, most completely, and giving to the eyes of his understanding a proper conception of the divine power present with the Prophet.

Divine Providence All About Us.

This is the center of our lesson and is in full accord with other Scripture statements, as, for instance, the Golden Text, the latter giving a picture, not of horses and chariots representing power, but an encampment representing a continued and abiding presence of the divine representatives, safely guarding all the interests of the Lord's faithful ones. The Apostle assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and to serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, not only the overcomers of the little flock, but also the overcomers of the great multitude. All of these, because believers in Christ, because at heart faithful, because fully consecrated to the Lord and begotten of his Spirit, are the special and happy objects of his grace, ministered to and served by the invisible messengers. Our Lord Jesus sets forth practically the same thought in his declaration, "Their angels do always behold [have access to] the face of my Father." (Matt. 18:10.) The Master's words seem to imply at least one or more angels having charge over the consecrated ones, the very elect. He uses a still different figure of speech in illustrating the matter, as though he would assure us that these messengers would not be delayed in caring for our interests, would not be hindered by more important heavenly business, but would at once have direct access to the divine presence and attention, so that our interests would have all needed consideration.

Gathering together these various pictures, we have as a whole before our minds something like this: Our great all-wise, all-powerful heavenly Father has numberless messengers at his command, and has deputized and appointed many of these to care for the interests of his cause on earth—especially to watch over and minister unto the very elect. Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual new creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with his general assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

Such a use of the heavenly messengers by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of him as ministers, servants, the one to the other. Indeed we may be assured that the invisible messengers or servants, generally if not always, are required to act through human instrumentalities — preferably through the very elect. Of this kind of service done by the brethren one for the other under the supervision of divine power and messengers, we have illustrations in . . . Psa. 91:11, 12, "He shall give his messengers charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Doubtless the heavenly messengers are connected with this work, yet nevertheless the work itself is apparently, we may say surely, done through human instrumentalities—the Church in the flesh. For instance, the Lord has given his messengers, the leaders of his consecrated people, "a charge," a message, a word of warning, counsel, advice,—an opening of the Word of Truth, an enlightenment of their understandings,—that they should bear up all the . . . elect in this time of serious trial, testing and stumbling, lest at any time any of this class should stumble through the peculiar trials of the present time. How manifestly this is fulfilled.

. . . .

It is for us to rejoice in these blessings and favors of the Lord and to increase our faith: and the lesson under consideration is a help in this connection, as showing us how even before the house of sons was organized, the Lord had power and exercised it in the house of servants in a way that illustrates to us the abundance of that power.

With the morning light the Syrian soldiers drew near to the village of Dothan, making inquiry for the Prophet, who, by prayer, brought upon them "blindness." The original word, however, does not signify total blindness, but rather a visual indistinctness, somewhat akin perhaps to mesmeric or hypnotic conditions as they are known today. The Prophet proposes to lead them to Elisha and his home, the latter being in the city of Samaria and thither he led them. When they were within the walls of the city and completely, therefore, at the mercy of the king of Israel and his warriors, the Prophet dispelled the illusion, and, opening the eyes of their understanding, made himself known to them and introduced them to the king of Israel, etc. The latter inquired of the prophet whether he had led them there to be smitten, to be destroyed as the enemies of the Lord and of the kingdom, but his answer was, No: that he should set a feast before them of royal bounties and send them back to their king and friends—in a word, that he should figuratively "heap coals of fire on their heads." This was done, and the result is given us in a few words, "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

The closing incident of our lesson is worthy of appropriation by spiritual Israelites. So long as we are the Lord's we may have absolute confidence respecting the results in all of life's affairs, and this confidence in God should tend to make us more generous and kind toward our enemies—to all those who would despitefully use us or persecute us. So far from seeking to do them injury in return or to speak evil of them in return, the admonition of the Lord is, "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "A soft answer turneth away wrath." A return of good for evil may not at once make a friend of an enemy, but it will at least bring blessing to our own hearts, and is much more likely to bring blessing to the enemy than if we should return him evil for evil. —Z. '04:302, 303.

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How earnestly we need to watch and pray, that we may indeed be fitted for our great future work! —Z. '16:325.

The Oath-Bound Covenant

Genesis 15:1, 5-16.

Golden Text:—"He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness"

IN a previous lesson we noted the unwise choice made by Lot, the result of which was his closer association than was necessary with the ungodly of Sodom. Additionally it exposed him to the same difficulties to which his neighbors, who were not under the special providence of God, were exposed. It appears that Sodom and the surrounding cities of the Jordan valley had for some time been paying tribute to Chedorlaomer, whose capitol city was several hundred miles further north. When they ceased to pay tribute Chedorlaomer sent an army—composed in part of recruits from various subject kings on the way—to take possession of Sodom as instead of the tribute money. Together with spoil of gold and silver and other valuables numerous captives were taken, of whom to make slaves. Lot, his family, his servants and his property were taken, sharing in all the burdens of the Sodomites. We can well imagine his discouragement and self-condemnation—that he had not only experienced vexation in his new home country by reason of the unrighteousness of his neighbors and the contaminating influence upon his family, but now he was sharing with them in the vicissitudes of his present condition, whereas had he remained with Abraham, his uncle, matters might have been different: evidently God had a special protecting care over Abraham — he was not captured nor despoiled.

Although Abraham was noted as a man of peace, we find him very loyal to principle in connection with this trouble. Two of the captured ones escaped and brought word to Abraham of the capture of the Sodomites, with Lot and his family. The man of God was not long in deciding respecting his proper course. Summoning all of his servants capable of assisting in such an emergency, 318 in number, he armed them and set out for the deliverance of his nephew. We are not to suppose that the army which captured the Sodomites was a large one, even though the names of four kings are introduced in connection with it. This was not a very long time after the flood, and the entire population was not as yet very large. The suggestions of higher critics about vast armies, great cities, etc., at this time, are out of harmony with the facts—first, the shortness of time after the flood; and, second, the ability of Abraham, with 318 men, to even make an attack and disconcert and confuse the army and deliver Lot and the Sodomites and all their goods. These facts all agree that the cities, the armies, the kingly powers of that day, were very meager in comparison to what we have in mind when we use similar terms in our day. In all probability the armies of the four kings combined did not exceed a thousand men, and the entire population of Sodom probably much less. The building of a city in those times would correspond more nearly to the building of a fort in our day. Thus, for instance, we read that Cain went to the land of Nod and built him a city—a house or villa for himself and his family.

Abraham's heroism in the matter was fully matched by his generosity, for not a particle of the spoil would he take for himself. The characters which the Lord loves and chooses are those which are unselfish, generous as well as just. In these respects Abraham showed that he had a considerable measure of the original image of God still remaining with him, not obliterated by the fallen conditions through which himself and his ancestors as members of the race of Adam had passed. On the other hand we see in Lot a less noble character naturally, a less strong character. This is evidenced afresh in the fact that even after this experience and deliverance he continued to reside in Sodom, to choose the life of luxury and ease, unfavorable to himself and his family, morally and religiously. Abraham chose the better part: his God was his friend, in whom he delighted; and such experiences in life as would best enable him to comply with the divine arrangements respecting him were the ones that he chose, and to the attainment of which he pressed his energies.

Repetition of the Covenant

We have already referred to the fact that God agreed to make a covenant with Abraham while he was still living in the land of Chaldea, and that the covenant itself was consummated and made applicable to Abraham from the time that he set his foot upon the land of promise in obedience to the divine call. But for his encouraging and the strengthening of his already great faith, God repeated this promise over and over in different terms. (See Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1, 5, 18; 17:1-10; 18:19; 21:12; 22:16-18.) There was in fact but one covenant, but various statements of it.

In our present lesson we have one of these repetitions of the covenant with some peculiar features. (V. 1.) In a vision the Lord assured him that he should not fear, that his God would be his shield and his exceeding great reward. Quite probably a fear had come to Abraham, in connection with the deliverance of his nephew Lot, that the kings whom he had ignominiously defeated would return better prepared, better on guard, and wreak their vengeance upon him, and that thus he might be interrupting, interfering, with the promise God had made that he and his posterity should inherit the land of Canaan. The declaration, "I am thy shield," would set at rest any doubts or fears along this line, as we elsewhere read, "When he giveth quietness who then can make trouble?" If the Lord would shield him how then could all the kings of earth do him harm or interrupt the divine program for blessing him and his posterity? The other statement is also worthy of notice: "I am thy exceeding great reward." Already he was the recipient of God's favors, rewards for his faith and obedience, and the promises also were in the line of rewards. But the statement here made went beyond all this and enumerates a still higher, grander truth, namely, that as Abraham had given himself fully to God, the latter now declares that in a sense he would give himself to Abraham, he would be his reward—to have his friendship, his fellowship, his love, his care, would be the highest and best reward that could possibly be given to Abraham for his fidelity.

And are not these precious promises applicable to the spiritual seed of Abraham? Is not this the essence of the Apostle's declaration to the Church —"All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's"? Again we hear the Apostle saying, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8:33.) Again we hear the Master's word to the same class, "The Father himself loveth you." (John 16:27.) O, what rest and comfort it brings to our hearts, amongst the trials and vicissitudes of life, to realize in the depths of our hearts that these are not merely words but truths. But only as we are able to realize an obedient faith are we able to apply these gracious promises to ourselves or to rest therein. This same thought is expressed respecting Abraham (v. 6), "He believed in the Lord." The word in the original signifies more than mere belief; it signifies what only believers can fully comprehend, viz., a rest of faith in God.

"He Counted It for Righteousness"

At first we are inclined to say, How strange it is that God should count our faith for anything —how simple, how easy a matter faith is? Why should it be valuable in God's sight? But the more we come to know ourselves the more we come to value faith, to realize that it is a scarce commodity in the world and even amongst Christians, professed believers. Under some conditions faith is very easy; indeed to disbelieve would be difficult. After this manner we understand nearly all the conditions of the Millennial age will be framed, so that the world in general will find it difficult to disbelieve in God, his power, his justice, his love. Then the reward will be merely for the obedient, though some faith will doubtless be required as well. Now, on the contrary, the reward is merely on account of faith, though what obedience is possible is required, too. "According to thy faith be it unto thee," was our Master's expression, and it represents a general principle of divine dealing now.

God is now seeking for a faith-full people, and declares that those whom he will find will be peculiar in this respect from the majority; not many great, not many wise, not many learned according to the course of this world have and exercise this faith —chiefly the poor, rich in faith, may be heirs of the Kingdom. Let us seek to cultivate continually faith in the Lord, in his Word, in his providential care. This is not trusting in the creeds and the theories of men, which might be merely credulity, but trusting in the Word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth forever. As God counted such faith to Abraham as so much of righteousness, so he counts to us, who are children of Abraham by faith. We are not righteous in a full, perfect, complete sense of that word. Even with our hearts turned to the Lord, and with the best of intentions, we cannot do the things that we would; but as to those who can exercise faith, and who do exercise it in harmony with divine righteousness to the best of their ability, God will count their efforts as though they are perfect! How gracious an arrangement! How lovingly we should show our appreciation by still greater faith and still harder endeavors to walk in the path of righteousness which faith dictates.

The Stars of Heaven, the Sands of the Seashore

In other statements of this promise or covenant God directed Abraham's mind to the stars and to the sand of the seashore and to the dust of the earth as illustrations of the numbers of his posterity. As yet Abraham had no child: every testimony of this kind was therefore to him a testing of his faith, a suggestion that he should inquire first for a beginning of these matters; and as days and years passed by the testing of faith was increased, yet to our joy we find that Abraham was full of faith in these promises, never doubting the power of God in some way to accomplish all that he had given him reason to hope for. Here we find a lesson for ourselves. Other promises have been made to us, some of which seem to be utterly impossible of attainment. Shall our faith stagger and shall we begin to doubt? or shall we hold fast to the Word of the Lord, nothing wavering, nothing doubting? In order to do so we must discriminate clearly between the words of man and the Word of God, so that we may reject the words of man, resting nothing upon their promises, but our entire weight of trust must rest upon the Word of the Lord.

How solicitous this should make us to have before our minds clearly and distinctly just what things God has promised to them that love him. In accord with this fact we find that God's most earnest and loyal children are continually desiring to grow in grace and to grow in knowledge of him through his Word and through his providences. . . .

In the light of the New Testament we may see more in these various promises than Abraham or others not thus enlightened by the holy Spirit. We can see that the spiritual seed of Abraham, Christ and the Church, are represented in this simile of his seed being as the stars of heaven, and we also see that the other part of the statement—that his seed shall be as the sand of the seashore—will have a fulfilment in Abraham's natural posterity, the Hebrew people, and in that still larger class of all nations referred to in the statement, "I have constituted thee a father of many nations." (Gen. 17:5.) How this deeper, clearer view of the promise enlarges the horizon of our eyes of understanding, and enables us to grasp with more and more distinctness the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God, which is yet to be manifested to every creature of our race, giving all opportunity of becoming children of Abraham—of full faith in and obedience to God. For that glorious opportunity the Apostle declares the whole creation is groaning and travailing, waiting until now—waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, and, more than this, waiting until the sons of God are selected, tested, accepted and then manifested in glory.—Z. '07:56-58.

“Lord, Help Me!”---Matt. 15:25

Mark 7: 24-30.

AFTER our Lord's discourse on the bread from heaven (we know not how long after) he and his disciples went westward to the border of Phoenicia. There, entering into a house with the evident design of secluding himself from general notice, and possibly to gain quiet and rest, the Lord was quickly discovered by a Syro-Phoenician mother, whose daughter was possessed of a demon, and who availed herself of this opportunity to importune the Lord for her daughter's deliverance. The fame of Jesus and his miracles, in the healing of the sick, etc., had evidently extended throughout that region, yet it must also have been known that Jesus was a Jew, and that his miracles and favors were confined to his own race.

We can readily see that there were numerous obstacles to the woman's faith, and the strength of faith which surmounted them compels admiration.

(1) She was a foreigner, a heathen, for whom God had manifested no favors, "without God and having no hope in the world." (Eph. 2:12.) Hence, coming to Jesus she not only had to overcome the prejudices of her own heathen ideas and instruction from infancy, but had also to overcome everything akin to pride and the fear of being despised and rejected as one unworthy of the favor she sought.

(2) As a poor and uneducated woman she would naturally have great diffidence in approaching a learned man, especially one so notable as this great Prophet of Israel, of whom no doubt she had heard much.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, her love for her daughter, and her confidence in Jesus, were so great that she sought him out; and after the manner of that time and place, in a loud voice and probably with weeping, "cried" to the Lord for compassion and assistance, in her trouble, saying, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." She met with a rebuff at the very start, for according to Matthew's account (15:23) our Lord ignored her entirely, not answering her a word. To many this would have been sufficient to have discouraged faith, and sent them away weeping; but not so with this woman: she kept up her cries and importunities. She was confident that the Lord had the power to assist her, and had not yet refused to do so, and hence her faith continued to cling.

The disciples seem to have been annoyed with her cries, which probably kept up for some time, and Jesus and the disciples had evidently left the house in which they were lodging and proceeded on their journey, the woman still following and crying out for assistance. The disciples came and besought him, saying, “Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Our Lord's answer to the disciples would seem to indicate that the meaning of the apostles' words was that he should grant her request and send her away; and his answer shows why he delayed so doing. The blessings he had to give were for God's covenanted people, the typical seed of Abraham, and this woman was not of that nation to which God had granted much favor every way; she was of a heathen nation, with whom God had not entered into any covenant relationship whatever, and for whom as yet he had done nothing. Our Lord explained this to the disciples, and in the hearing of the woman, not merely for their benefit and hers, but also, we may presume, for our admonition.

Altho our Lord would seem to have been resisting the woman and unwilling to grant her favor, we consider it not unreasonable to suppose that he thoroughly understood the case from the beginning, and that he adopted the method he did to draw out her faith, preparatory to the giving of the blessing desired.

And herein we have a lesson respecting persistency in entreating the Lord for relief from the power of the devil, however exercised, whether in our friends or in ourselves. As the woman knew that the case was a hopeless one as respected relief from any other quarter, so we know to hope for relief from the Adversary only through the Lord's interposition. Like this woman, therefore, our faith should be equal to the emergency, and should persistently hold on to the Lord for the blessing which, with a greater knowledge than she, we may be sure he will be pleased to grant in his own due time and way. "Shall not the Lord avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, tho he bear long with them?" (Luke 18:7). If in our case the Lord shall not see best to grant a prompt response to our prayer, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One" (Matt. 6:13), we may be sure that it is not from lack of interest in our welfare, for has he not manifested his interest by redeeming us? If then the response shall not come in the way or at the time we had inclined to hope, let faith still hold her anchorage in the divine goodness and power, and in the exceeding great and precious promises, and let us remember that according to these the time, at very farthest, will not be long, until the Millennial Kingdom, when the great Adversary shall be bound, and deliverance full and complete from his power shall be granted, not only to ourselves and those immediately dependent, but also to all of the "groaning creation" now under his baneful influence.

The hearing of the reason why she had been ignored, so far from discouraging the poor woman, seemingly convinced her the more that Jesus had the power to help her, and, quite probably in front of him, she prostrated herself at his feet, after the custom of the East, so expressive of humility, dependence and entreaty, accompanying this with the plea, "Lord, help me!" (Matt. 15:23-25.) When finally our Lord addressed the poor woman prostrate at his feet, importuning his assistance, his words were again a rebuff, calculated to dishearten one of little faith, but correspondingly to strengthen a great faith. His answer to her was not one of disdain and contempt, nor of indifference to her woe; for indeed we well know that our dear Lord had no such feelings toward any. It implied interest and sympathy, but explained to her a reason why she was not a proper subject, namely, that as the children of a household would be provided for first, before the dogs, so it was proper that the Lord's covenant people, the Jews, should be ministered unto, healed, taught and blessed, first,—before these blessings should in any manner or degree be extended to the Gentiles, who in comparison were as the dogs of the household. And, by the way, we should notice here that altho dogs amongst the Jews were spoken of frequently with great disrespect, as for instance, in Rev. 22:15, "Without are dogs," etc., referring to the wild dogs which roamed the country and were pests, yet the Jews were in the habit of having house dogs which were esteemed and petted by the family, and the word that is here used by our Lord, and also by the woman, signifies these house dogs or little dogs, pet dogs, and not the objectionable kind.

The woman triumphed over the obstacles of the Lord's argument, and with wonderful keenness and humility she acknowledged that she was not one of the children who had a right to the Father's blessing, but was merely one of the dogs under the table, desiring a stray crumb of divine favor. Then our Lord, appreciating such great faith and earnestness, said, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter," and that the woman's faith was of the proper kind was demonstrated by the fact that she believed the Lord's word, ceased her importunings, and went to her home, to find the matter even as Jesus had said.

How different is our case in many respects from that of this poor woman! So far from resisting us the Lord has graciously called us to a knowledge of himself and of his gracious plan, and we who were once aliens and strangers and foreigners have not only been redeemed with the precious blood, but upon making a covenant with the Lord have been adopted into his family, have been privileged to surround his table, and he has set before us as "meat in due season," in great abundance, all the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word. We need not to importune for these; they are ours for the taking. We simply need by faith to accept them and to use them. And if the poor woman of this narrative could exercise such faith in the Lord, and could get so great a blessing, it evidences to our minds what is abundantly stated elsewhere in Scripture, that nothing that we have or could offer to the Lord would be more acceptable in his sight than faith—faith in him, in his power, in his love, and in his promises. Whoever will not exercise faith in these things cannot grow in knowledge of the Lord, cannot make development, cannot be overcomers, gaining the desired victory, for, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," and "Without faith it is impossible to please God."—1 John 5:4; Heb. 11:6.

There is little that any of us possess that we could reasonably hope would be acceptable to God outside those mercies which he has bestowed upon us through Christ — faith, trust in God, is one of those heart-qualities which we can bring to the Lord, that he will not despise; honesty of heart is another; humility, realizing our utter dependence upon him, and confessing it, is another. These various sentiments were expressed by the woman in the narrative, by her actions and by her words, and as these brought to her divine favor, even before it was due to come to the Gentiles, much more should our humility, faith and candor prevail and make us endeavor to do that which is pleasing to God, who has already accepted us in the Beloved, and with whom he is well-pleased in proportion to the measure of our accepting through the Lord all the exceeding riches of his grace which he has promised to them that love, reverence, trust and obey him.—Z. '00:190, 191.

The Power of the Word of God

Neh. 8:1-12.

7'

"The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the Law."—Nehemiah 8: 3.

REBUILDING the city wall tended to unify the hearts of Israel and to revive faith in the Lord, and in his gracious promises to that nation. Nehemiah was wise in beginning the reformation movement as he did, and his wisdom undoubtedly was of the Lord and in harmony with his prayers for wisdom and usefulness. So all who would engage in divine service require not only zeal but also the wisdom which cometh from above, and only those who seek it prayerfully will be in condition to be used of the Lord and to be helpful amongst their brethren. . . .

With the completion of the wall and the security thus realized and the faith and hopes thus inspired, it was but reasonable that the event would be celebrated with feasting and rejoicing. But Nehemiah wisely waited this until he had reorganized the people socially according to the heads of their families, especially the priests and Levites, who were the divinely appointed ministers and teachers of the people. (See Chap. 7:63-73.) Meantime also, donations were received for the Temple and its service, and Nehemiah, himself very wealthy, setting an example of liberality in his large gifts, was imitated by many. By this time the "Feast of Trumpets" on the first day of the seventh month drew near. It was a time for the general gathering of the people, the beginning of their civil year, announced by trumpet blowing. Here the narrative of our lesson begins, with the spontaneous gathering of the people in an open place, a plaza, near the water gate, called here a "street."

In all probability this congregation of the people was instigated, first by Nehemiah, the Tirshatha (Persian for provincial governor), and secondly, through the heads of the people and the priests and Levites. Evidently preparations had been made for such a gathering, for a large platform, called a "pulpit," had been erected. When the people assembled and called for the reading of The Book of the Law of Jehovah, appropriate at this season, all things were in readiness, and Ezra the priest, accompanied by thirteen men, evidently chiefs of the people, representing the various tribes, took their appointed places on the platform or "pulpit" to give dignity and importance to the service.

Apparently the convention was opened with prayer. "Ezra blessed Jehovah the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads and worshiped Jehovah with their faces to the ground." They were about to begin a study of the divine Word, as expressed in the Law, and no one is in the proper attitude of mind to be taught and blessed by the Lord's Word unless he be in the attitude of heart which appreciates the greatness of God and the unworthiness of himself. Such a condition of heart is essential to true hearing and understanding. And here we have the secret of much of the failure to understand God's Word—today as well as in times past. "He that seeketh findeth: to him that knocketh it shall be opened," and the "seeking" consists not merely in church attendance or Bible reading, but in a heart-hunger to know the truth and to obey it.

The service began early in the morning, "From the morning [daybreak] until midday," and during that time we are told that "the ears of all the people were unto the book of the Law," that is, they gave close attention to hear and to understand every word. It was not only necessary that they should desire to know and that they should be in the attitude of heart to implore divine blessing and assistance, but it was also necessary that they should **be attentive,** giving ear. And more than this, it was necessary that there should be amongst them teachers capable of expounding the Law, explaining the meaning of words, and how the divine Law was to be applied to the daily life, and what it signifies. Thirteen teachers (Joshua and twelve others) are indicated by name. These probably were priests, and the statement is that associated with him were "the Levites." These "caused the people to understand the law, and the people stood in their place." We are not to understand that the people **stood** for five hours: they stood while the Law was being read, and sat down, after the eastern custom, on their haunches, during the time explanations were being given. The expression "all the people stood in their place" signifies that the teachers mentioned moved about amongst the people, instructing them, answering their questions, making plain the meaning of the features of the Law just read, while the people remained in their places. . . .

Arrangements are already made for the great antitypical "Feast of Trumpets," and the beginning of a new civil year or Millennial era for mankind —for all who desire to be the Lord's people, to hear his Word and to obey it. Raised above the people, on a **higher plane of being,** will be Christ, the great Priest, and his associates, spiritual Israel, to declare the Word of Jehovah, the Law of righteousness, the Truth: and amongst the people, to teach them and to expound the Law to them, will be the ancient worthies, representatives of Israel in the flesh, and the Levites, all who believe, the entire household of faith aside from the elect and then glorified Church.

The blowing of the trumpets announcing the beginning of the antitypical Jubilee year will soon be heard throughout all the world, and the true-hearted will speedily respond. Meantime our great and wise Governor is preparing for the great work of the future. The arrangements are all so perfect and so complete that when the declaration comes the people will all hear the word of the Lord "distinctly," and they will get the "sense" and "understanding" of it. It will no longer be as in the past and at the present time, a din, a Babylon of confused noises, misrepresenting the divine message, and confusing those who desire to know the will of the Lord. The first result of that presentation will be weeping and mourning for sin, but the message of the great Priest and Governor will go forth to the people, to the effect that they need not weep and mourn, because the great sacrifice for sins has already been offered, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and that in consequence the Millennial Day in which they will be living is not to be a day of mourning but a day of rejoicing, a day of acceptance of divine favor, a day of newness of life and of consecration to the Lord.

The message will then be similar to the one which Governor Nehemiah promulgated, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet [enjoy the wonderful provisions of God's bounty with thankfulness and pleasure] and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared [cause the knowledge of the Lord to fill the whole earth], for this day is holy unto the Lord: neither be ye sorry, for the pleasure of Jehovah is your strength"—rejoice that you are restored to divine favor. And all the people will rejoice, because they will understand the words of the divine Law—because they will see and appreciate the divine arrangement, and find it to be indeed "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

These blessings which will be to the world in the future may already be appropriated in a measure by the Lord's consecrated people. By faith we are permitted to hear the words of the divine Law in advance of their public proclamation, to the whole world, and therefore blessed are our ears which hear and our eyes which see, for many have not seen and have not heard,—the god of this world at the present time blinding their minds so that they cannot. To us, too, the first hearing of the divine Law should perhaps bring remorse and tears as we realize our shortcomings, and that with our very best efforts we cannot measure up to the perfect standard. But to us also comes the Lord's message, through his servants our brethren, saying, Weep not, but rejoice. Behold the goodness as well as the severity of God, behold his Love as well as his Justice, and that he has made through Christ a full propitiation, not only for the sins that are past, but also for the inherited weaknesses and blemishes of the present and future—that all of our blemishes have been covered with the great sin-offering finished at Calvary.

It is our privilege, therefore, to dry our tears and to rejoice in the God of our salvation, and to eat of the fat things of his Word, the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, and to drink of the sweets of his favor. . . .

Another lesson here is that while God has all power he nevertheless uses human instrumentalities. He could have spoken from heaven, instead of sending Nehemiah: but he did not. He could have thundered his Law without having it read by Ezra: but he did not choose to do so. He could have instructed the people without using the priests and Levites or any human instrumentality for exposition; but such was not his method. And the Lord's dealings in the past are our best guides respecting his mind on such subjects and respecting what are likely to be his methods for the present and the future. . . .

"The Word of God is quick and powerful." (Heb. 4:12.) There is much need that this lesson be thoroughly learned by the Lord's people. Nothing can take the place of the Lord's Word: and all teachings, whether oral or printed, should be recognized as secondary to the inspired Word, and should be received only as corroborated by the Scriptures. Or rather, they are to be appreciated only as they unlock the treasures of wisdom hidden in the Bible —riches of which the world in general is ignorant, and of which even the majority of Christian people, altho they have Bibles by the million, know comparatively little. Indeed, as Bibles become more numerous the great Adversary seems to be permitted to have the greater power to deceive and to mislead respecting its teachings; so that today, with its greatest opportunities, is witnessing a general decline of faith in the Scriptures—"a great falling away." . . .

The more the Lord's people shall be able to discern that we are already in the "evil day" mentioned by the Apostle, in which many shall stumble and fall from their steadfastness of faith, the more should they give earnest heed lest they should let slip the precious things of the divine Word, which is a lamp to their pathway, and through which God supplies the needed aids for walking the narrow way which leads to the Kingdom.—Eph. 6:13; Heb. 2:1; Psa. 119:105.—Z. '99: 246-249.

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In olden times, before the art of soap-making was learned, it was the custom to use a sort of clay, called fuller's earth, after the manner in which we now use soap, and based upon this is an ancient Persian fable, which runs thus: "One day, as I was in the bath, a friend of mine put into my hand a piece of scented clay. I took it and said to it, 'Art thou musk or ambergris? For I am charmed with thy perfume.' It answered, 'I was a despicable piece of clay, but I was some time in the company of the rose, and the sweet quality of my companion was communicated to me.'" This well illustrates the fact that every Christian must of necessity have more or less of Christ's sweet spirit, meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love, and that worldly people thrown into the association of such should absorb from them much of this spirit of gentleness and kindness. And as the spirit of Christianity is received in turn from the Lord, so it is necessary that all the members of the body of Christ should be much in the company of their Head and Lord, that they might be thoroughly filled with his spirit. Let us remember, however, that as the clay was susceptible to the delicate and sweet odor of the rose, it would have been equally or more susceptible to stronger vile odors, had it been in the company of that which is vile: and that if it had been thrown simultaneously equally near to the influence of the rose perfume and to the thing of vile odor, the latter would have been the stronger, and the result would have been an offensive odor. So with the Lord's people. It is as necessary that we shun the evil as that we cleave to that which is good.—Z. '98:293.

◆

The ancient worthies manifested a faith and a trust in the Lord and his promises which worked, and by their works manifested a love for the Lord and a loyalty to him which did not hesitate to sacrifice reputation, wealth and life itself, in obedience to the principles of righteousness revealed to them.—Z. '98:106.

◆

O what rejoicing there will be! Fleshly Zion and Spiritual Zion will rejoice together! Then soon the poor, chastened world will begin to join in the songs of praise to the God of all Grace. What wonderful times are just before us! Though clouds and darkness for a brief time obscure the bright beams of the blessed Millennial Dawning, soon the glorious "Sun of Righteousness" shall rise in splendor, and its beams will rapidly spread over all the earth, scattering the darkness of sin, dispelling the fogs of error and superstition, and bringing the world into the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.—Z. '14:341.

◆

As iron sharpeneth iron so doth the countenance and word of Christian fellowship and the handgrasp cheer each other on the narrow way toward the heavenly Canaan.—Z. '07:237.

Praying that does not fully represent the sentiments of the heart is apt very quickly to degenerate into a mere form of words—drawing nigh to the Lord with the lips while the heart is far from him,—perhaps enwrapped in business or pleasure or sin. Whoever, therefore, would make progress in the spiritual way must not only pray with the spirit and with the understanding, but he must also watch—against the sinful tendencies of his own flesh—self-gratification, selfishness.—Z. '00 : 268.

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J P Maloan

Old Corn Gems

No. 119

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL."—Z. '18:51.

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The Christian's Tower of Strength

Dec. 16

"The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—Hebrews 13: 6.

THE Christian's position in the world is a peculiar one. None others can afford to be so courageous and independent as he. Yet the true child of God is not self-sufficient nor independent of any outside help. He is exhorted in the Word of the Lord to be not boastful, but humble-minded, realizing his powerlessness of himself and his need of God. Indeed, unless he is humble-minded he cannot be pleasing to the Lord. But at the same time he is to be full of courage and confidence. No power in the Universe is able to cope with our God; and He has declared that He is the Support and Shield of His children. He is the Strong Tower of those who put their trust in Him.

If we abide in Christ and His Word abides in us, He will be our Deliverer in six troubles, and in the seventh He will not forsake us—because we have been called of God, because we have responded to that call, because we are seeking to glorify Him in our bodies. Hence we need not fear what any man can do unto us. The Apostle Paul, who exhorts us to courage and confident trust in God, was a noble example of courageous faith. He tells us why we have such abundant reason for assurance of faith and absence of fear of man. He says, "Let your conversation [conduct, manner of life] be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

True Faith, Not Presumption

We should not say, The Lord is my Helper, and therefore He will not suffer my house to burn, nor burglars to break in and steal my belongings. I will not lock my doors at night: for the Lord is watching over me and mine. This would not be the spirit of a sound mind. It would not be true faith, but presumption. We should take all reasonable precautions to prevent losses of such kinds. The Lord expects us to do all in our power for our own protection, and not expect Him to work unnecessary miracles to protect us from our own carelessness and inefficiency. Under such circumstances He might allow us to become involved in difficulty and loss, and thus to learn a needed lesson. We are stewards of whatever the Lord has entrusted to us, and He expects us to exercise care in regard to whatever is properly under our care but belonging to Him. We should have buckets and water at hand so as to be ready in case of fire. We should have proper fastenings upon our doors and our windows. When our own duty is done, we are to leave ourselves fully in the Lord's hands, knowing that all will be well with us.

If the Lord permits seeming calamity to come, we may rest assured that it will work out our good, if we are properly exercised by the experience. After having done our part, we should trust all consequences to Him, not doubting that He will care for us in His own best way. The Lord will give us whatever help along temporal lines He sees is for our highest interests, if we do not remove ourselves from His keeping and seek to manage our own interests. Even in the event of such a mistake, if we come to see where we have been wilful and have leaned to our own understanding and renew full allegiance to the Lord, the difficulties in which we have become involved may prove to be a real blessing in opening our eyes to our wrong course, in showing us our own insufficiency to guide ourselves, and in bringing us wholly back to God.

"That Wicked One Toucheth Him Not"

Our highest interests, our real interests, are matters of our Father's constant care. If we keep very near to the Lord, we are protected from the power of the fallen angels, who would, if permitted, bring about our ensnarement and overthrow. They cannot really harm us if we are watching and keeping our garments white. Only a lack of faithfulness would subject us to their power to any extent so far as our real interests are concerned. They can neither harm our bodies in any way nor cause any violence to us, unless the Lord permits it for our highest good—perhaps for our deliverance and exaltation, as in the case of our Master.

Let us, then, keep ourselves, that "that Wicked One touch us not." We are subject to various attacks by the deluded servants of the powers of darkness. There may be attacks upon our good name, our reputation, our bodies, or what not, with more or less legality. We are to a considerable extent subject to man, through "the powers that be." Yet our bitterest enemies are powerless to touch us, unless permitted by the Lord. And we cannot be touched by the great Adversary, if we remain true to our Covenant—true to the Vows we have taken to the Lord. The Adversary can never touch our real selves save by our own unfaithfulness.

We Will Worship Our God Alone

It may be the will of God to permit us to suffer, just as He permitted John the Baptist to be imprisoned and finally beheaded, just as He permitted Jesus to be arrested and crucified, and He has permitted many of His saints in the past to be maltreated or killed. But we need not fear what men may do unto us, knowing that our God, whose we are and whom we serve, will be with us constantly, and will cause all things to work out His own glorious purposes for us and in us.

We would, of course, be glad to please men, if this were possible. But wherever it is a question of pleasing God or pleasing man, we will say, as did the three young Hebrews to the king of Babylon: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. . . . But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." We will not do anything contrary to the Divine will, to the command of Jehovah. We will worship our God alone!

When the Jewish Council (Acts 4:13-20) commanded the Apostles Peter and John to speak no more in the name of Jesus, their reply was: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." When Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, said to our Lord on the night of His arrest and trial, "Knowest Thou that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" Jesus answered: "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." So it is with all the footstep followers of the Master. God's grace will be sufficient. Man is powerless to harm a hair of our heads, unless it is permitted of our Father in Heaven for His glory and our own highest welfare.

Courage Born of Faith

The world has often wondered at the calmness of the Lord's humble little ones under circumstances which would cause the stoutest heart to quail. But to follow the course in life which will glorify our God and magnify His grace, to be able to meet wisely and courageously the trials and difficulties as they come to us as Christians, representatives of the King of Heaven, and to meet them in the spirit of rejoicing, counting our tribulations all joy, it is necessary that our hearts be in attune with the Lord, that we have no will but His, and that the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, shall be overcome. We cannot accomplish this in our own strength, but in the strength of God alone. We are instructed to fear Jehovah, and not to fear a weak mortal. The righteous are as bold as a lion, as gentle as a dove, as meek as a lamb. This peculiar combination of boldness, gentleness and meekness should characterize every Christian.—Z. '14: 282, 283.

Abraham's and Lot's Testings

Gen. 13:1-18.

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—Matt. 7:12.

DEVELOPMENT of character implies a variety of experiences and tests. In choosing Abraham as his agent and channel through whom he would bring to the world his purposed blessings, God chose a good man, but not a perfect one—for there was not a perfect man to choose, as there has not been since, of all Adam's posterity. While God called Abraham, he made him only partial promises until he had manifested faith by obedience. And it was appropriate that various and severe tests of faith should come before the fulness of divine favor should be guaranteed him. One of these faith-tests came through a drouth in the land of Canaan, and, as a result, a food scarcity, a famine, in the region where Abraham had settled, flocks and herds.

It would naturally be a severe test of faith for him to see his cattle lean and dying, and to think of the fertile country which he had left, and that this drouth-stricken land was the one to which the Lord had called him. He must go somewhere to find water and sustenance, and concluded not to go back to Babylon, but to journey south-westward into the country bordering Egypt. Egypt was well advanced in civilization, and like Chaldea, his former home, was a heathen land—to the extent that the people had considerably lost sight of the one God and his worship, and had become worshipers of various deities. It was a dangerous experiment: Abram might have become enamored of the civilization, etc., of Egypt and have lost his respect for the Lord's promise in regard to Canaan; yet it did not have this effect, but apparently, on the contrary, became a blessing to him; for his experience there convinced him more and more that he could not have true happiness under the prevailing conditions: He would rather wander about and have no continuing city, and not be bound by any of the customs and rules of the world, which recognized not God. His experience taught him to look for, to hope for, to wait for, the New Jerusalem city or government, which has not yet been established, but for which the Lord's people still pray: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth."

Abraham little realized how much he needed to pray, "abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." On arrival he, as a great man, was brought to the attention of the king, and Sarah, his wife, was introduced,—but as his sister, or niece, not as his wife. Abraham heard probably about this time of an incident which had occurred with one of the Pharaohs, of which we now know through recently discovered papryus records—that at the instance of his princes he sent an armed force and took a beautiful woman from her husband for his harem. Sarah was a beautiful woman, and Abraham feared that Pharaoh might kill him in order to have his wife. This difficulty probably did not occur to him when he started his journey, nor until he had arrived there and was called before the king. Thus the Lord's people always find it: if they leave the land of promise, seeking better things in the world, they find their difficulties and trials greatly increased.

Abraham determined that as an expedient for the preservation of his life he would tell but a part of the truth and speak of Sarah as his sister, without acknowledging her as his wife. The transaction was an ignoble one every way, and quite unworthy of the man; but the Lord did not forsake him, but, as the record shows, returned Sarah to him with a rebuke from the heathen king which must have stung Abraham severely, and have served as a lesson for the remainder of his life. Thus all things work together for good to them that love God—even their mistakes and slips become lessons and blessings under divine providence. Having learned his lesson, Abraham quickly retraced his steps to the land of promise, returning again to Bethel where first he had built an altar to the Lord and formally consecrated himself: there again Abraham called upon the name of the Lord. The prompt retracing of his steps is also a lesson for the Lord's people. If we find that through lack of faith or weakness of the flesh a wrong step has been taken, contrary to the Lord's will and our best spiritual interests, no time should be lost in retracing the steps and in calling upon the Lord. We have an altar consecrated with the precious blood of Christ, far superior every way to that which Abraham consecrated with the blood of typical animals; and the Apostle exhorts us, "Let us come boldly [courageously—full of faith] to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need."—Heb. 4:16.

One of the strongest evidences of the truth of the Bible records, and that they are not the work of priests or knaves, is the fact that the weaknesses and frailties of its grandest and most luminous characters are depicted with as free a hand as their virtues and strong qualities. Had the story of Abraham and the story of David, both men full of faith and after God's own heart, and acknowledged to be his friends, been concocted, they assuredly would have omitted all the blemishes of the present narratives. As it is, the weaknesses of these men, and divine compassion toward them notwithstanding these, and their faith and repentance and re-establishment in divine favor, have been lessons of incalculable value to the Lord's saints throughout the age, many of whom have at times found themselves more or less similarly entrapped, and to some extent stumbled by the great temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil.

Abraham's flocks and herds increased, and the number of his servants. Likewise also did Lot's—tho he was by no means as wealthy a man as his uncle. Prosperity seems as likely to bring trouble as adversity, or more so; and it does not surprise us to find that a strife broke out between the herdsmen of the two masters, and that apparently the strife extended to Lot. The land at that time was not thickly settled, nor was it owned and controlled by syndicates; hence Abraham and Lot moved hither and thither through the grazing country, merely seeking to find unoccupied pasturage, and as the Canaanites (Lowlanders) and the Perizites (Highlanders) dwelt in Canaan, it necessarily meant that migratory bands, such as Abraham's, would find the pasturage at times somewhat restricted. Abraham's prompt course for the maintenance of peace is worthy of emulation. His words to Lot on the subject would make a good motto for the home or for the shop: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we are brethren." The Lord's people are not all peaceably disposed according to the flesh, but peaceableness is a prominent element in the new nature, the new mind, the new will, the new heart; hence peaceableness is to be cultivated and more attention is to be given to it in proportion as we find our natural disposition to be contentious. This is one of the ways the Lord's people are to be renewed in word and in deed:—"By the transformation of their minds."

Abraham was not only peaceable, but generous, as his proposition to Lot shows; for altho he was the richer of the two by far, and his larger herds and flocks required more abundant provision, he nevertheless gave Lot the choice. Here is another lesson for all of the Lord's people: generosity, not an unreasoning and unreasonable generosity which would give away everything, but an even-handed, fair generosity which is well represented in our Golden Text; viz., the golden rule that we should treat others as we would reasonably wish them to treat us: whoever follows this rule, will, like Abraham, find that in the end it will be profitable—even tho it may at first seem unprofitable.

It would appear that Lot was less generous than his uncle—more selfish; and taking advantage of the latter's liberal proposition he chose the rich, fertile valley of the Jordan—the land of Sodom, of which the record is that it was "like the garden of the Lord" (the Garden of Eden), and like the most favored portion of Egypt. Lot was a keen business man apparently, for his choice signified not only the richest of the grazing country, but additionally the best market for his flocks and herds; because the Jordan valley seems to have been a commercial highway frequented by traveling caravans, etc., the best of customers for sheep and cattle. Abraham and Lot together might have taken the Jordan valley at first, seeing its suitability to their occupation; no doubt the reason why Abraham avoided it is found in the fact of the wickedness of the people there, and that he did not wish to bring either himself or wife or servants into close contact with such people, preferring the less fertile district because of their separateness from such associations, with which he could not feel in harmony or fellowship.

Lot possessed much less faith and much less character than his uncle, but was also a good man, and his determination to make the country of the Jordan his home does not signify that he had fellowship with the Sodomites. On the contrary, the record is that their course "vexed his righteous soul." (2 Pet. 2:8.) He evidently was deluded, as many of the Lord's people of today are deluded, into association with evil influences for the sake of worldly prosperity. He no doubt persuaded himself that he could live separate from the contaminations of Sodom, and even exercise a moral influence over the unrighteous. How unwise, very unwise, his course really was may be seen in the light of his subsequent history. The wisdom of Abraham stands out in striking contrast, and the two experiences furnish valuable lessons for all who are seeking the heavenly city and, praying, Thy Kingdom come. Abraham's course illustrates our Lord's words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and all these [needful] things shall be added unto you." Lot's course illustrates our Lord's words, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world!" Lot's quest for wealth, etc., no doubt brought rich returns, for he became a wealthy and influential man in Sodom, but his wealth and influence cost too much; first, they cost his peace of mind, for "his righteous soul was vexed;" he had no real happiness. Second, it cost him his children, sons and daughters, all but two unmarried ones, and even they apparently were blemished through their contact with evil example. And it cost him also his wife, whose sympathies for her children over-balanced her interest in the Lord and righteousness. It cost him additionally, in the end, all his flocks and herds and wealth, all of which went down in the fire from heaven upon the city of destruction.

There is a great lesson here for us all, especially for such lovers of righteousness as have the care, the guardianship of children: the lesson is that they should think less of earthly advantages, social, political and financial, and think more, much more, of the moral and spiritual influences and advantages obtainable through isolation from the evil which is in the world,—so far as possible "make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame [blemished through sin] be turned out of the way [of righteousness]."—Heb. 12:13.

Abraham did not attempt to coerce his nephew; but, properly no doubt, after having advised him to the contrary, he let him take his course, contenting himself with giving the admonition and example to the contrary. Here is another good lesson for the Lord's people; very many who like to have their own liberty are disposed to use force and coercion in dealing with others, and the results are generally bad for both parties. Lack of faith lies at the bottom of such difficulties; self-will attempts to regulate our own affairs, and branching out attempts also to regulate the affairs of others: whereas a consecrated will, resting by faith upon the Lord's promise, permits the Lord to have the helm; to control not only in respect to the believer's personal interests, but also in respect to the interests and affairs of others. Abraham had manifested his faith in God, not only in respect to the future blessings promised, but also in respect to the incidental details of his every-day life. Hence he could afford not only to not interfere with Lot's liberty, but could be generous to the extent of giving Lot his choice, knowing that the Lord would take care of him, and fulfil to him all the gracious promises incidental to his call. And in proportion as we are children of Abraham by faith we should have and should continually exercise similar faith, that we may experience similar blessings under God's providence.

While Lot's choice led him farther from the right, Abraham's blessing was increased by his course: for again the Lord appeared to him, in a manner not explained, and gave him renewed assurance respecting the original promise, telling him to look in every direction and to know assuredly that, while this land at the present time was under various rulers, it should in time be given to him and his posterity everlastingly. Yet with this renewal of the promise must have come another testing of faith, because Abraham as yet had no child. How improbable, therefore, the fulfilment of the Lord's word, that his seed should ultimately be very numerous, hyperbolically "as the dust of the earth!" Yet Abraham's faith wavered not. Likewise the faith of the Lord's people today wavers not respecting his promise — for it has not yet had a fulfilment, as the Apostles Paul and Stephen both declare.

Abraham lived in the land many years and died there, yet was a pilgrim and stranger; a sojourner and not an owner to the day of his death. (Heb. 11:13.) Stephen's explanation of the matter is very explicit. (Acts 7:5.) He declares that God never gave him so much of the space as would be covered by his foot; and points out that the time for the fulfilment of this promise is future —during the resurrection, the Millennium of Christ's reign, after the Heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the glorified Church, the Bride with the Bridegroom, shall have been established in the control of the world as God's Kingdom.—Dan. 7:13, 14; 1 Cor. 15:24.

With each manifestation of obedience on the part of Abraham came fresh blessings from the Lord, fresh repetitions and expanded declarations respecting the divine purpose, strengthening and encouraging him. Nevertheless he understood that the realization of his hope lay in the future, and this was clearly indicated by the Lord's words, "Arise, journey through the land, in the length and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee." In compliance with this instruction, that he was to be a pilgrim, moving from place to place, Abraham only removed to Mamre, and doubtless in harmony with his custom at each new stopping place, he built there another altar unto the Lord—another typical acknowledgement of sin, of his own unworthiness, and of the fact that his standing before God, his acceptance with him, was in the merits of a great Sin Offering which had not yet been made. So with us who are the Lord's people, wherever we are; we are under divine care, and may rest, and may have the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our hearts; nevertheless, we are not to be at home, nor to seek to feel at home under present imperfect conditions. We are to continually remember that the Lord has promised us a heavenly inheritance, and we are to seek for and wait for it, assured that it will be ours if we remain faithful to the end of life's pilgrimage.—Z. '01:132-235.

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The fully consecrated believer in Jesus may receive of the holy Spirit, and this more and more abundantly as he comes into glorious touch and relationship to the Lord in thought and word and conduct. But any neglect of the divine teachings or principles in the exercise of self-will in opposition to the recognized will of God, is sure to that extent to quench the spirit of holiness, the spirit of a sound mind, the Spirit of God, which is in no wise forced upon us, but must be entertained, must be held on to, must be desired if it would be retained and increased.—Z. '06:58.

An Interesting Question

Why Were Not Job and Others Priests?

Question.—Since it was the priests who were to offer the sacrifices and since no one could be a priest except he was called of God, how was it that some of the Ancient Worthies, Job and others, who were not priests, offered up sacrifices?

Answer. — The sacrifices which these offered were not sin offerings. They did not offer up sacrifices according to the types of the Law, as the Day of Atonement sacrifices, for instance. This whole arrangement of the Jewish Law, by which the sacrificing was taken out of the individual's hands and put into the hands of the priests, was a new departure in God's dealings.

Abraham, we know, presented offerings before the establishment of the Priesthood. The exact time in which Job lived we do not know. We merely know that he was Job of Uz, and walked before God with a perfect heart; but we think we are justified in supposing that he did not live during the Law dispensation, with its typical sacrifices. If this be true, his course was in full line with Abraham's course when he offered up sacrifices. When Abraham was stayed from offering his son, he offered up the ram caught in the thicket, as the Lord directed.

What these patriarchs did in the matter of offering up sacrifices was evidently a token on their part of appreciation of God and of the fact that a sacrifice for sins was necessary, just as Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and offered them to God, though he was not called to be a priest; but none of these sacrifices was accepted in the same sense that the sacrifices were accepted under the Law. None of these sacrifices ever made the offerers themselves perfect, nor did they atone for anyone else; they were merely the same as a prayer would be, a manifestation of a good desire of heart and of appreciation of God and a desire to reverence him, and a recognition of the fact that sin required some atonement. So when the Lord showed how this sin-atonement was to be made he pictured the work of this Gospel Age. He appointed a priest to represent the Lord Jesus, and under-priests to represent the Church. A work of sacrifice was done on a particular day of the year—the Atonement Day—representing the work of this Gospel Age in which these "better sacrifices" for sin are offered; and under this larger arrangement no one is permitted to offer the sacrifice except a priest, God thus indicating that the work is entirely under his supervision and direction.—Z. '10:267, 268.

"Lord, Increase Our Faith"

Luke 17:5-19.

Dec. 23

OUR Lord's teachings were so contrary to the spirit of this world and so adverse to its policy that his disciples felt that to adopt his methods and principles and discard their own really involved a revolution of their former ideas. And in yielding themselves, as true disciples, they felt the need of a stronger, firmer faith than they had yet been called upon to exercise. They were quite persuaded from the purity and nobility of his character, and from his miracles and his teachings, that he was indeed a teacher sent from God; yet remembering the requirement of discipleship.—"Whoso forsaketh not all that he hath [all his own ideas and will and possessions and earthly prospects], he cannot be my disciple."—they felt that to continue in this attitude of acceptable discipleship would require a growing faith which would rise to every emergency of his requirements. Hence their request, "Lord, increase our faith."

And they were quite right in their reasoning; for the Lord also clearly shows that the true disciples make progress in the school of Christ toward the full overcoming of the spirit of the world. And this progress can be achieved by faith only—by such full, implicit confidence in his teaching and training as will keep them continually as earnest, diligent pupils under his guidance and instruction. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.) This, by the way, is very suggestive of what it signifies to be an "overcomer," to whom pertain all the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel of Christ. It is simply this—that day by day we attentively heed and patiently carry out the instructions of our infallible Teacher and Guide in full, unquestioning faith in his wisdom and love; no matter how heavy will be the daily cross or how severe the discipline. It is indeed a tedious, life-long process, but the end will be glorious; and even the daily discipline, patiently and meekly borne, will bring the present rewards of conscious progress in the great work of overcoming and of a nearer approach to the goal of a ripened Christian character. All of this is implied in the beautiful words, so expressive of the faith and fervent devotion of true discipleship,—

> "Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee,
> E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me."

We observe that the Lord made no direct answer to this request of his disciples, but that he dwelt upon the power and desirability of faith. He showed that even a weak, but genuine, faith could so lay hold upon the power of God as to instantly root up and replant a tree, and on another occasion he said it could remove mountains into the midst of the sea. Is the suggestion preposterous? No, not to faith: for, bear in mind, faith is not imagination, nor self-will, nor ignorance, but it is a reasonable thing founded upon good and substantial evidence: so that our Lord's teaching here implied what on another occasion he clearly stated; viz., that the request be made according to the will of God. (John 15:7.) Thus, for instance, if the least disciple were assured, on good evidence, that the removal of such a tree or mountain would be a part of the divine will, and that it was his duty to do the commanding, he should have equally strong faith in the results. Thus it was when the Lord caused the barren fig tree to wither. This, observe, was not to satisfy mere idle curiosity, but like all of his miracles, which God wrought by him (Acts 2:22), it was for a definite and wise purpose, to teach an important lesson, and also to convince his disciples of his divine recognition and authority.

But since there is no basis of evidence for faith that the will of God is to remove literal trees or mountains in answer to any idle or self-willed or ignorant commands of men to do so, a genuine faith in his willingness to do it now is an impossibility. But regarding the tree and mountain as symbols of difficulties and obstructions in our individual Christian course, or in the general course of God's work, we know that "miracles" are wrought for those who exercise faith; and they going forward in the strength of the Lord, are thus permitted to overcome difficulties and to work righteousness otherwise impossible.

While the Lord made no direct answer to this request for an increase of faith, his whole subsequent course with the disciples was a fulfilment of it. And so it will be with us if in a similarly true spirit of discipleship we pray, "Lord, increase our faith." The increase of faith will come, not by a miraculous infusion, but in the natural process of the Lord's leading and training. In the school of experience, in following his leading and in the blessed results of each step of the way, faith develops and grows.

Verses 7-10 show that it is in the Lord's service we are to look for the rewards of faith, the special manifestations of divine favor, in the removal of obstacles and difficulties found to be in the way of our progress in his service by cultivating Christian character in ourselves and others, and in ministering generally to the furtherance of the divine plans. We may not expect these rewards of divine favor except as we prosecute the service. And when they are received we are not to regard them as evidences that we have done any more than it was our duty to do. As servants of God we owe him the full measure of our ability: hence we may not feel that we have merited or earned the great blessings of heavenly inheritance and joint-heirship with Christ. We have merely done our duty; but God, with exceeding riches of grace has prepared, for those who lovingly serve him, rewards far beyond what they could have asked or hoped for. We can do no works of supererogation: even at our best our service is marred by many imperfections, and could never find acceptance with God except as supplemented by the perfect and finished work of Christ.

Verses 11-16 show how the rewards of faith, which are of God's free grace and by no means earned by our faith, should be gratefully received. The samples given illustrate the fact that the rewards of faith are not always gratefully received. Here were ten lepers cleansed, and only one returned to give thanks and worship. So also of the many who receive justification by faith, the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God through Christ, how few return to present themselves living sacrifices, thank-offerings, to God, their reasonable service!—Z. '96:86, 87.

Joseph Sold Into Egypt

Gen. 37:23-36.

Golden Text—"Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good."—Gen. 50:20.

In tracing the overruling providence of God in the lives of some of his chosen people of the past we find a great stimulus to our faith: and in the noble examples of the ancient worthies we should indeed find spurs to our zeal for God and our faithfulness in his service. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph—how beautifully they walked with God! how simple and childlike their trust in the dark as well as in the light! and how earnest and sincere their devotion!

In a former lesson, Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob's old age, was brought to our attention (a dutiful and promising boy of seventeen), and his prophetic dreams and the envy of his brethren toward him. In this lesson we see how that envy and hatred brought forth their fruits. With the exception of two of the brethren — Reuben and Judah—all were desirous of taking his life: but the two did not dare to openly oppose the rest, so they suggested other measures. Reuben had him cast into a pit from whence he intended secretly to rescue him, but where the others were agreeable to letting him die of starvation. But before Reuben could accomplish his purpose of rescue, Judah had proposed his sale to a company of traveling merchants going down to Egypt; and to this they had agreed, and had disposed of their young brother and divided the price among themselves. Of this transaction Reuben evidently was not informed, and he shared his father's grief at the supposed death of Joseph.

Judah's motive was apparently a double one—first, to ease his conscience by choosing the lesser of the two evils, avoiding to incur the guilt of his brother's blood, and yet desirous to accomplish the purpose of getting rid of him, and that at a slight profit to themselves. Then, in common with the other eight, he was willing to lie to his father and to make believe that Joseph was dead. Judah's choice of the lesser of two evils he may have regarded as a species of virtue, as the suggestion from, "Let us slay our brother," to "Let us sell our brother," presents a strong contrast. Thus men are often deceived by comparing a great with a lesser evil, or themselves one with another, and especially with those of meaner disposition, instead of with the perfect standards of virtue and true holiness set forth in the Scriptures.

This supposed loss of a beloved son was another severe trial for Jacob. Evidently Joseph was the one in whose line of descent he looked for the fulfilment of the divine covenant. He was the eldest son of his beloved Rachel, and a son after his own heart, in whom was the reverence of God and the love of righteousness. The coat of many colors seems to have been his expression of this hope, which he did not seek to conceal from his family, being desirous and hopeful probably that they also would share his sentiments. And in Reuben's favor it may be remarked that of all the brethren he had more reason to be envious of Joseph, since he was the eldest son of Leah, the first wife. For twenty-three long years Jacob suffered the loss of this beloved son before he received the glad tidings —"Joseph is yet alive." Yet he faithfully held to the promises of God and waited for the consolation of Israel, and humbly developed the graces of meekness and patience which, in God's sight, are of great value.

In the case of Joseph the trial was one of great severity. From being a beloved and favorite son, tenderly reared in his father's house, he was suddenly transported to the position of a slave in a foreign and heathen land. Added to this, too, were the bitter experience of the murderous hatred and cold-hearted cruelty of his brothers and the thought of his father's grief and loneliness, and that without any apparent prospect of ever seeing his face again, or of even hearing a word from him, as no railroads or telegraphs or mailing arrangements then facilitated communication between foreign nations, and Joseph was a servant having no command of time or money.

This was surely a bitter experience for a young man of seventeen; but as he left the scenes of his childhood and all that he held dear on earth, and that under such painful circumstances, like his father when he fled from Esau, bereft of everything else, he took with him the staff of the divine promises and the principles of truth and righteousness under whose influence he had been reared, and he resolved to be loyal and faithful to God and to maintain his integrity under whatever circumstances he should be placed. Alas! how few young men in these days —nor did they in those days—make such resolutions, even under the most favorable circumstances. This is the age when they generally think they should be sowing their wild oats, of which they generally forget they must afterward reap the bitter harvest.

While God could have prevented and might have interfered at any step of these distressing circumstances, we see that he did not, but that he allowed each one to freely manifest his disposition for good or for evil; yet above them all we see his overruling providence in turning these very circumstances to account in a most marvelous way for the furtherance of his benevolent designs and to the special blessing of his faithful servants. Thus, for instance, Joseph being thrown more upon his own resources and in contact with a new, and at the time the most advanced, civilization of the world, received a new and valuable education which otherwise he could not have received, and a discipline that developed manly strength, courage, tact, and firmness of character; while his isolation from all the old home associations led him to closer communion with God and reliance upon his power.

Then, too, in the providence of God, Joseph was the forerunner of all Israel in the land of Egypt, where God proposed to give that entire nation a needed and valuable experience for four hundred years, in contact with the highest civilization of that day, yet under the humiliating circumstances of servitude which would tend to humble them, and also to teach them reliance upon God. Here, too, their race would be kept pure and distinct from others, since, as slaves, they could not intermarry with the Egyptians. And through Israel in the land of Egypt, not only the Egyptians, but other nations through them, were to learn something of the power and character of the true God.

A very special lesson of importance to us, in considering the course of divine providence with these ancient worthies, may be gathered from the fact that the value of their experience in developing character and in shaping circumstances for future good is so manifest to us from the standpoint of the ends attained, while to them, as they passed through those experiences, they had to walk by faith trusting the guiding hand of God, where they could not trace his loving purposes.

Abraham could not know that God would provide himself a lamb other than Isaac; and therefore it was his part to obey the divine command, even to the raising of the knife to slay his son. Jacob could not know how Esau would meet him in peace and permit him to enjoy the good of the land; but it was his part to arise and take all his house and all his goods and go to meet Esau when the Lord commanded. Joseph could not know just how all the painful circumstances that befell him after he left his father's house in search of his brethren were to work together for such great good for himself and for all his father's house, and for all Egypt as well; but it was his part to carry with him into Egypt the principles of divine truth and righteousness and the noble example of a godly character, and as a servant to Potiphar to faithfully perform his service to the best of his ability. And while, like his father Jacob, he thus walked in the path of faith and duty, God could add his blessing; and we, at this end of the line, see the blessed results of their faithfulness, trust and humility.

Just so, in the light of eternity, the past experiences of our lives will appear if, like them, we prove faithful under all circumstances—in the dark as well as in the light, in the storm as well as in the calm. As children of God we must all have the discipline of experience: let us see to it, therefore, that we patiently and meekly submit ourselves to God, taking courage from the noble examples of the ancient worthies, and from the manifestations of God's love and care and wisdom in making all things work together for good to them as he has promised to do for us also.

"Leave to his sovereign sway
To choose and to command:
So shalt thou gladly own his way,
How wise, how strong his hand!"

—Z. '94:109, 110.

"He Careth for You"

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."
—1 Peter 5: 7.

ALL who are of the Lord's people surely realize that there are cares and difficulties of life which are our portion and which are perplexing. These cares of life come also to those who are of the world—to some more and to some less. But they **surely** come to all who are the Lord's children.

The word **care** is used in two different ways. Thinking of the word in the sense of exercising proper thought and giving proper attention to that which is entrusted to us, or concerning which we are responsible, we might be in danger of misunderstanding our text. The word **care,** however, very often has in it the thought of **worry, trouble of mind;** and this is its use by the Apostle in this place. The Apostle Paul also says, "Be careful for nothing"—be worried about nothing, have anxiety about nothing. So we might render the words of St. Peter, "Casting all your **anxiety** upon Him; for He is taking thought for you."

Importance of Little Things

The Apostle's advice is not that we shall throw off all sense of responsibility, and cease to exercise care in what we do and in respect to our duties and obligations. Surely we all agree that the man or the woman without care for anything, in this proper sense, would be totally unfit for any position in life. We often notice evidences of some one's not having been sufficiently careful. Perhaps the wall paper has been carelessly marred or the furniture scratched; doors are slammed or left swinging when they should be closed for warmth, etc. Some might say, Oh, these are very small matters! **But one who is careless, thoughtless, and inattentive to** these matters is very likely to be untrustworthy in **larger matters.**

Personally, it is painful to us to see these things; and undoubtedly it is so to all who exercise proper care. The children of God, His representatives before men, should not go blundering along through the world or needlessly annoying others, whether it be the brethren or people of the world. Our influence for good may be greatly marred by inattention to what might be called little things, but what in reality are not so. There is a trite saying which is full of meaning: "Trifles make perfection; and perfection is no trifle." The Lord's people should be the most careful people in the world.

Our Lord said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much"; and the reverse of the statement would be equally true—that he that is unfaithful in that which is least is unfaithful also in much (Luke 16:10.) These little things of every-day life may prove to be more crucial tests of real character than will seemingly larger matters. Little courtesies, little acts of thoughtful consideration for others, how much they mean! How greatly they often affect the happiness of those around us and our own influence as ambassadors of Christ! So we need to exercise much care and thoughtfulness in regard to our words, our actions, and everything with which we have to do. This is not the care that we are to cast upon the Lord for Him to bear. This we are properly to bear ourselves.

Our Experiences Supervised by the Lord

God is the most **careful** Being in the Universe, we may be sure. He is not **careful,** in the sense in which the word is used in our text—in the sense of worry and unrest of mind—but He is care-full in the right and proper sense. There are cares that come to the Lord's people because they are harassed by the Adversary. These experiences the Lord permits for the very purpose of leading His people to cast their care upon Him, of bringing them closer to Himself, of teaching them patient endurance, of showing them more fully their need of Him, their utter helplessness and wretchedness without Him.

But worries and frettings—anxieties that would hinder us in the Lord's service, that would rob us of our peace in the Lord—should be dropped, not carelessly, however, but intelligently, with the thought that Jesus, our great Burden-bearer, has invited us, yea, urged us, to cast all our care—all that would disturb our peace—upon Him. He will make our burden light and ease our tribulations. This is a rest of faith, and cannot be attained otherwise than through faith in His love, faith in His promises.

Our Father's Care for His Children

Each day that a Christian lives he should be more reliant upon the Lord. He should realize more fully than before that our Heavenly Father, who has provided for the grass of the field and for the birds of the air, cares far more for His children than for the flowers or for many sparrows, and that He has a Plan also for the world—an arrangement for their blessing, in due time. But we have already entered into the blessing of the Lord; we have already become His children, and are His especial care. And "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" those that reverence Him.

We cannot be faithful children of God if we are full of worry. Worry is one thing, but proper carefulness is another. We should be more careful every day, and thus be able to fulfil our obligations to the world in general, to our families, to ourselves, to the brethren, and to the Lord—to render our God more effective service.

We are not to be troubled and anxious as to where we are to get our next suit of clothes. We have a suit of clothing for the present, such as the Lord has seen fit to give; and we are to do our best to provide the things needful. If the Lord should never give us apparel as good as many others have, or as rich or dainty food, we should not worry, but be content with whatever His providence arranges for us, and accept it thankfully. He will give what is best—what is for our good. We should not doubt, nor fear that He will not provide for our needs. He knows all about our affairs, and is not unmindful of our welfare. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

How needful this humility before God, and how consoling and precious this loving assurance! As we go on in this blessed way marked out by our Lord, let us learn more and more fully that we are not to ask anything according to our wills, but only that His will may be done in us and for us. His wisdom is unerring. Let us tell the Lord all about our burdens, great and small, and let us appropriate to ourselves His love and sympathy, applying to our hearts the balm of His Word, of the precious promises which are the heritage of His own, trusting Him that He is both able and willing to supply our every need—yea, that He delights thus to bless us, if we abide in His Love.

"How strong and sweet my Father's care!
The words like music in the air,
Come answering to my whispered prayer—
'He cares for thee!'

"Then naught can hurt me, shade or shine,
Nor evil thing touch me or mine,
Since Thou with tenderness Divine
Dost care for me!"

—Z. '14:230, 231.

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A careful, prayerful searching of our hearts will make plain wherein we lack in conformity to the perfect will of God. And if we discover in ourselves any perverse way, we shall correct it. Thus we more and more "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—the mind or disposition of Christ, the spirit of love and loyalty which characterized Him. How important it is, in the very short time which yet remains to us, that we fully awake and apply ourselves most diligently to the cultivation of the Godlike, Christlike disposition of love, the love which seeks above all else the glory of God, which is kindly affectioned toward the brethren, which rests in the precious promises, which trusts fully in the dark as well as in the light, and which has no shadow of doubt that all the good things promised in God's Word shall be fulfilled.—Z. '15:283.

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The things for which the Lord's children should especially pray are specified in His Word. The Holy Spirit is the special gift of God to His children.

When we come to know that the Holy Spirit is the influence, the disposition of God, then we know what we are praying for. We want more and more of the Holy Spirit of God, that it may make us more gentle, more kind, more loving; we want more and more of the mind of Christ (mind and Spirit being used here interchangeably). We realize that we must strive to have this mind of Christ. If we day by day cultivate the spirit of the Devil, we cannot expect ever to attain the mind of Christ. If we determinedly cultivate the Spirit, the mind, of Christ, then the spirit of the Adversary can gain no entrance into our hearts; and we shall become more and more sound in mind. We come to know more and more the perfect will of God as we are filled with His Spirit. Thus we are being prepared for an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom.—Z. '15:185.

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With our very best endeavors we may never get entirely free from all of the "close girdling" sins while still in the flesh; but one thing is sure—the heart must be free from them, else we can never be accepted. The heart must be so completely filled with the love of God that it will feel a repugnance to all of these evils, which are repulsive to the divine mind; and happy for us it is that God has promised to accept such a condition of our hearts, and that knowing the imperfections of the flesh with which we contend, he is not requiring that we shall attain to absolute flesh perfection, but that we shall be pure in heart in order to see him and to share in the glory which he has promised to his people.—Z. '03:409.

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With the world, at the beginning of the New Age, it would be a Law quite over their heads to say, You shall love everybody. They would need to have some simple statements such as, Thou shalt have no other gods but Me; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not murder; thou shalt not bear false witness. The Decalogue is the very best Law for the world of mankind. We cannot improve on the wisdom of the Law-Giver who gave this Law to Moses in the beginning. It will not surprise us, therefore, if the Ten Commandments will be put upon the whole world, just as they were upon the Jews; and that mankind will be shown that the **spirit** of the law is **Love**; but that they will come **gradually** to the understanding of this principle; for at the beginning they would not have the proper appreciation of the matter.—Z. '11:220.

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"Painful and dark the pathway seems
To distant earthly eyes;
They only see the hedging thorns
On either side that rise;

"They cannot know how soft between
The flowers of love are strewn,
The sunny ways, the pastures green,
Where Jesus leads His own."
—Z. '16:188.

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If we lose sight of the fact that God regards us from the standpoint of the will, if we get to thinking of ourselves and God's estimate of us as according to the flesh, we are sure to get proportionately into darkness and confusion and discouragement. But let us not forget, on the other hand, that the spirit, or will, is counted alive because of its righteousness, because it is in harmony with God. Let us, therefore, never be slack in respect to the will, or intention, governing the conduct of our lives, but remember that any laxity will mean the proportionate loss of spiritual life. To will right is always possible to us, and nothing less than an absolutely loyal will could be acceptable to God in Christ. — Z. '03:171, 172.

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It should be observed also that while rewards of temporal prosperity were promised and given to Fleshly Israel as a nation and as individuals, yet the very cream of that nation, the faithful patriarchs and prophets received no such temporal rewards, but like the Gospel Church, they endured hardness as good soldiers and nobly fought the good fight of faith; and their abundant reward will be in the glory of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God. Note the account of their faithful endurance as recorded by Paul in Heb. 11.

The temporal rewards and punishments and general discipline of Fleshly Israel were typical of the Lord's similar discipline of the world in the age to come; while his selection out from among that people of a worthy class of overcomers for the earthly phase of the Kingdom was typical of his selection during the Gospel Age of a class of overcomers for the spiritual phase of the Kingdom. In any case, it pays to wholly follow the Lord God of Israel, who is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him to walk in his ways. — Heb. 11:6; Prov. 8:32-36.—Z. '07:303.

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We rank the Ancient Worthies higher than the Great Company. This seems to us the logical order, since the Ancient Worthies—in their overcoming more particularly — resemble the Little Flock, who voluntarily lay down their lives for the Truth. This logical order seems to be supported, too, by the Scriptures—not only the type of the order of the Levites but additionally we have the Scriptural declaration that these Ancient Worthies are to be "Princes in all the earth," which implies a special dignity, or honor of position as the earthly phase of the Kingdom. Again, in Rev. 20:9, these Ancient Worthies seem to be marked as still a special, separate and distinct class in the earth, represented by the camp of the saints (holy ones), and the beloved city. The fact that at that time, at the close of the Millennium, they will have reached perfection, and the fact that these Ancient Worthies will be still a markedly separate class, implies to us a higher honor of rank, over and above the perfection of human nature. What the Lord may have of special reward for these in the everlasting future, beyond the Millennium, we are not told; but as we consider the heavens, the work of God's hands, and the innumerable worlds therein under preparation for inhabitants, we may reasonably suppose that these Ancient Worthies, who were faithful during the reign of evil, even unto death, will have some further honorable service, not only during the Millennial age, but subsequently.—Z. '04:312, 313.

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"WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME"

This is a difficult lesson for all of the Lord's followers to learn, but a very important one. If we allow ourselves to look about us and to wonder why some fellow-disciple is not receiving apparently the same amount of chastisement or trials or difficulties or burdens that the Lord permits to come to us, and if then we permit ourselves to become judges of the Lord and his wisdom and his providences, the result will be disastrous to ourselves. It will destroy our peace and undermine our faith and hinder us from learning the lessons necessary to prepare us for the Kingdom. If such criticisms of divine providence at any time come to our minds, we should answer ourselves, promptly, in the language of our Lord to Peter, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." You are not competent to regulate these matters, nor is it proper nor necessary for the Master to explain to you all of his plans and purposes. It is far better for you that you learn faith, submission and trust. No two of us have the same natural disposition, no two of us, therefore, need the same disciplinary training at the hand of the Lord. We have confidence in his wisdom and love; let us manifest it, realizing that if our trials are greater our blessings will be proportionate, and as the Lord said to Paul, so he would say to each of us, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9.) With the Apostle let us say, If, therefore, the Lord's grace is proportionate to our trials let us receive with rejoicing all the trials he may send that we may have the more of his grace! It is for each sheep to know the Shepherd and to follow him, taking as straight paths for his feet as possible, and leaving with the Shepherd the general oversight of the flock and its interests, giving attention in proportion as the Lord through the brethren gives opportunity to assist in the shepherding work and in the name of the Lord to counsel or assist his dear flock.—Z. '08:174.

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STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS' GENERAL CONVENTION

DECEMBER 30th, 31st, 1923, JANUARY 1st, 1924.

Convention Hall, 1202 Wharf Street, Victoria, B. C.

SECRETARY - - - Bro. Bartlett

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30th—

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—Gal. 5:1.

Chairman - - - - Bro. Biddle
Pianist - - - - - Sr. Ridley

10:30 A.M.—Address of Welcome.......Bro. Sellars
Response.......Bro. Vance
11:00 A.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (Page 2).......Bro. Bartlett
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Biddle
2:15 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.......Bro. Cooper
or Convention Business Meeting
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 P.M.—Study, Temple Sacrifices (page 37, par. 2).......Bro. Edwards
Pianist - - - - - Sr. Oelke
7:30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.......Bro. Johnson
8:00 P.M.—Study Temple Notes, Question 11.......Bro. Heard

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31st—

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."—Josh. 1:9.

Chairman - - - - Bro. Hogen
Pianist - - - - - - - Sr. Rae

10:30 A.M.—Bethel Service.......Bros. Maloan, Hanham, Mourant and Holbrook
10:45 A.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (page 6).......Bro. Towner
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Carter
2:15 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.......Bro. Barrett
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 P.M.—Study, Temple Sacrifices (Ezek. 45:23).......Bro. Heard
Pianist - - - - - Bro. Sellars
7:30 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.......Bro. Shepherd
8:00 P.M.—Study (Esther 8:15-17).......Bro. Edwards

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1st—

"Finally, brethren, be joyful, secure perfection of character, take courage, be of one mind, live in peace, and God who gives love and peace will be with you." —2 Cor. 13:11 Weym.

Chairman - - - - - - Bro. Zinck
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. McCarter

10:30 A.M.—Bethel Service.......Bros. Foster, Anderson, Bolstad and Haller
10:45 A.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (page 9).......Bro. Palmer
Pianist - - - - - - Sr. Edwards
2:15 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.......Bro. McCarter
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 P.M.—Temple Notes, Question 103.......Bro. Edwards
Pianist - - - - - - - Sr. Heard
7:30 P.M.—Discourse.......Bro. Heard
8:45 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.......Bro. Maxwell

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